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YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

ALSO BY WILLARD CONNELLY

THE REIGN OF BEAU BRUMMELL

THE TRUE CHESTERFIELD

SIR RICHARD STEELE

BRAWNY WYCHERLEY

Y O U N G G E O R G E
F A R Q U H A R

*THE RESTORATION DRAMA AT
TWILIGHT*



By
WILLARD CONNELLY

WITH EIGHT PAGES OF HALF-TONE ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON

CASSELL & COMPANY LIMITED

London, Toronto, Melbourne, Sydney
Wellington

1949

This book is produced in complete conformity
with the authorized economy standards.

First published 1949

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
HUNT, BARNARD AND COMPANY LIMITED, LONDON AND AYLESBURY

F.948
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IN RECOLLECTION
HALF A CENTURY AGO
OF CERTAIN YEARS OF YOUNG COMPANIONSHIP
AND OF THE ESCAPADES THEREFROM ARISING
THIS BOOK IS FOR
HOWARD LINDSAY
THE SEQUENCE IN WHOSE CAREER
LIKE FARQUHAR'S
HAS BEEN THAT OF
UNDERGRADUATE-ACTOR-DRAMATIST

‘I’m quite of your opinion about Farquhar;
he’s the only fellow amongst them. [He is]
something more than a mere comic tradesman:
and has a grand drunken diabolical fire in him.’

W. M. THACKERAY to

EDWARD FITZGERALD

October, 1841.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	9
I A BOY FROM DERRY	13
II UNDERGRADUATE	27
III ACTOR	38
IV A YOUNG MAN OF THE COFFEE- HOUSES	49
V ADVENTURE INTO COMEDY	65
VI ARRIVAL OF A DRAMATIST	82
VII GIDDY HEART	101
VIII A MIDSUMMER ESCAPE	119
IX HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND	138
X DRURY LANE AGAIN	158
XI DESPERATE AUTHORSHIP	173
XII THE COMEDY OF EXPOSURE	189
XIII MARGARET PEMELL	202
XIV LIEUTENANT FARQUHAR OF THE GRENADIERS	220
XV WHAT CAME FROM SHREWSBURY	240
XVI THE TIDES	258
XVII WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD	271
XVIII THE LAST FIRST NIGHT	294
EPILOGUE	304
NOTES	317
INDEX	335

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Robert Wilks	96
Anne Oldfield	97
Susanna Carroll	97
Abel Boyer	112
William Bullock	112
Captain (later Sir) John Vanbrugh	113
Scene from <i>A Trip to the Jubilee</i>	208
Scene from <i>The Twin Rivals</i>	208
William Wycherley when Farquhar Knew Him	209
Scene from <i>The Recruiting Officer</i>	224
Scene from <i>The Beaux Stratagem</i>	224
George Farquhar in the Court of Apollo and the Nine Muses	225

P R E F A C E

THE 250th anniversary of the arrival in England of George Farquhar, from Dublin, was appropriately commemorated in the region in which he disembarked. He landed at Chester in the spring of 1697. During the months of May and June, 1947, only thirty miles away in the city of Manchester, his masterpiece *The Beaux Stratagem* was played for a stated season of four weeks at the Intimate Theatre, with Mr. André Van Gyscghem as Archer and Miss Agnes Lauchlan (memorable as Lady Fidget in *The Country Wife* of Wycherley) as Mrs. Sullen.

Revivals of the two other principal Farquhar comedies a little earlier may be said to have led up to this anniversary. The Arts Theatre in London had won conspicuous favour with three seasons of Farquhar. Between November and January, 1943-4, *The Recruiting Officer* ran for fifty-six performances, notable with Mr. Trevor Howard as Captain Plume, Mr. Edward Byrne as Captain Brazen, and Miss Helen Cherry as Silvia. But the play which first put Farquhar into the company of his great compeers, *The Constant Couple*, better known in his day by its alternative title *A Trip to the Jubilee*, enjoyed two runs; it was acted twenty-nine times between July and November, 1943, and again thirty-five times between September and March, 1945-6, with Mr. Alec Clunes a very capable Sir Harry Wildair and Miss Avice Landone quite living up to her name as Lady Lurewell.

Thus, for four consecutive years audiences in England have seen Farquhar played. Of no other Restoration dramatist can this be said in the present century.

In attempting a biography of so durable a contributor to English dramatic literature, I have tried not to press too far the received opinion that Farquhar above all his contemporaries of the theatre was an autobiographical author. But there is no disputing that into at least one character in each of his plays he put the character of himself, 'the warm-

P R E F A C E

hearted, rattle-brained, thoughtless, high-spirited young fellow'. Hazlitt goes on, 'there is internal evidence that this sort of character is his own, for it pervades his works generally, and is the moving spirit that informs them'. Upon this point critics both before and after Hazlitt are agreed.

As to Farquhar's letters to various ladies, and theirs to him, while none exists in manuscript I have taken most of them as substantially genuine. The women concerned are not in all cases identifiable. Yet the letters give the true ring of amorous adventure and intrigue, however embellished some of them may have been after Farquhar recovered the originals from the 'charmings' whom he had pursued. If in parts certain of the letters are fictitious, they at no point run counter to the kind of life that Farquhar led in his heyday.

The chief recent addition to our knowledge of Farquhar—the identity of his wife, together with a good deal of her history and some of Farquhar's own — was made by Professor J. R. Sutherland in 1937, when he discovered two petitions and three certificates in the Portland Papers. The Duke of Portland has kindly allowed me to publish further details from those documents, and I would thank Mr. R. L. Atkinson, of the Hist. MSS. Comm., for his aid. In 1945 the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, discovered valuable information in the private register of the College, bearing upon Farquhar's undergraduate days. With regard to his boyhood in Northern Ireland, I have been generously and continuously helped by Mr. W. S. Ferguson, of Foyle College, Londonderry. Mr. Francis O'Kelley, of Dublin, was good enough to supply me with material concerning the dramatist's brother, Peyton Farquhar. From Lichfield Mr. Percy Laithwaite, that steadfast ally of researchers, sent me important items of local history. To Mr. C. J. Hindle, of the Bodleian; to Dr. D. A. Chart, Deputy Keeper of the Public Record Office, Belfast; and to Mr. Croft-Murray of the British Museum I am alike indebted.

The question of a portrait of Farquhar has been difficult. So far as I can discover the one here used, Farquhar and the Muses (facing p. 225), has been published only once since 1718. Prof. L. A. Strauss made of it in 1914 a frontispiece

P R E F A C E

to his admirable edition (*Beaux Stratagem, Recruiting Officer, Discourse upon Comedy*), which in my opinion contains the most penetrating criticism written on Farquhar by an American scholar. But this likeness of the dramatist, drawn only two years after his death by one who obviously had often seen him, is the sole extant picture of Farquhar considered by the Director of the National Portrait Gallery to be true. To him, Sir Henry Hake, I owe special thanks for identifying this portrait, and for turning up the facts on Eloas Knight, first illustrator of Farquhar's plays.

Finally I should like to make acknowledgments to Canon and Mrs. S. L. Ollard, of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and to Sir Owen Morshead, Librarian of Windsor Castle, for the many favours they bestowed upon me in the course of my writing.

W. C.

THE ATHENAEUM,
PALL MALL, S.W.1.
July, 1948.



CHAPTER I

A BOY FROM

Derry

IN the year 1633, when the name of Farquhar first emerges in the clerical records of Northern Ireland, the Rev. George Farquhar was on the eve of relinquishing the curacy of Clones. He was leaving a town made picturesque by history for one whose landscape, as it happened, owed more to nature. Clones, a market town of County Monaghan on the border of Fermanagh, was known afar not merely for lace-making but for its high round tower, and for its ruins of an Abbey a thousand years old; Cleenish, near Enniskillen, to which living the curate was called in 1634 to become a rector, lay ten miles to the north-west above the waters of scenic Lough Erne. In particular, be it said, the move thither was to Farquhar's advantage because it was in the right ecclesiastical direction.

But Cleenish did not carry the rector to the limit of his capabilities. His migration west by north he was to continue. After some years he advanced from Cleenish to the living of Kilbarron, County Donegal, a large parish which encompassed the town of Ballyshannon near Donegal Bay, but of more moment still, a parish which was itself taken in by the influential diocese of Raphoe.

Farquhar now bore the title of 'minister'. His maturer period found him a man of distinction in his community. With his family – a wife, two sons, and a daughter – he lived

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

to the fulfilment of his usefulness in a house provided by the parish, a house that stood in a townland of Kilbarron called Kildoney Glebe. By the end of his incumbency the minister was enjoying the somewhat embellished name of George Farquhar of Kildoney. Having rounded out his years, he died; his will, drawn in 1656, was within a twelve-month proved in the Prerogative Court.

The Christian names of this father and of his two sons, George, Robert, and Alexander, point to kinship with both branches of an ancient Ayrshire family, the Farquhars of Gilmilnscroft and of Over Katrine. When and how did members of that family cross to Ireland? The circumstances are unknown. But the word Farquhar is Gaelic, from *fearachar*, meaning manly, brave; Fearachar was the name of an early Scottish king, and the Farquhars of Gilmilnscroft are traceable from the day of King Robert III at the end of the fourteenth century. In the Ayrshire family the names Robert, Alexander, and George recur again and again through the centuries, and for three generations in the period under scrutiny, down to 1681, the eldest son of the Farquhars of Over Katrine was given the name of George.

Their namesake in Ireland, George Farquhar of Kildoney, had meanwhile lent not a bad start to the family in the great diocese of Raphoe. Barely twelve miles north of Kildoney, in the valley below the Blue Stack Mountains, stood the town of Killymard, to the west of the town of Donegal. In the Barony of Bannagh was Killymard, and it counted about 2,000 inhabitants, over whom the rector chosen was a certain John Farquhar, probably a nephew of the late George. It was in 1667, only ten years after the death of George Farquhar of Kildoney, that Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Dromore, had to make a cathedral appointment; he collated John Farquhar as Prebendary of Raphoe. The Farquhars were getting on in the Church.

Raphoe, the cathedral town, and the midmost point of a varied and busy textile industry, was twenty-five miles north-east of Killymard. Periodically John Farquhar had to travel that distance and take his turn as preacher in the cathedral. Only fifteen miles farther on, again to the north-east, was the still larger town and ecclesiastical centre of Derry.

A BOY FROM DERRY

Some time during these years, either shortly before 1667 or not long after, a Farquhar who was a clergyman, whose work lay within convenient reach of Derry, and whose Christian name is once set down as 'William' but who was more likely John Farquhar the Prebendary of Raphoe, married. (There is no mention of any *William* Farquhar in clerical records; and whereas the name John does occur in the family both earlier and later, William is nowhere again found.) Eventually this couple had a son, whom they named Peyton; a daughter of name unknown; and possibly another son called John, who may have been the eldest of the brood.

Tradition speaks of the mother of these children as kin to the Wiseman family of Essex, specifically to one Capel Wiseman, who like the Farquhars was well regarded among the clergy. The Wisemans were in turn related to the Capels, Earls of Essex. It proved at any rate a good omen for the Farquhars of Ulster that in 1676 Lord Essex, who happened to be Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, brought with him upon his return from a visit to England his cousin and godson, Capel Wiseman, aged forty, to be his chaplain.

Wiseman had been a fortunate man. Although he had lived his boyhood and youth through the turbulent years of Cromwell's wars, that strife appears to have helped rather than hindered his education. From Winchester he had gone through St. John's, Cambridge, migrated for additional learning to Queen's College, Oxford, and in 1661 proceeded Fellow of All Souls. Soon thereafter he grew esteemed as well for executive capacity as for scholarship, both of which attainments had won him the notice of churchmen of merit.

In the light of this standing it seems defensible nepotism that Essex, no later than the autumn of the same year in which he brought Wiseman to Ireland, conferred upon his godson the deanery of Raphoe. The new dean thus became the immediate superior colleague of John Farquhar the prebendary.

It was in the following year (1677) that the mother of the Farquhar children above mentioned went to Derry, reputedly in order to obtain 'superior medical assistance'. She lay in, and gave birth to a son. The infant succeeded to the well-approved family name of George.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Difficult it is to write with certitude of the parentage of a child about whose parents less is positively known than of the parents of Shakespeare. However, contemporary documents or accounts do indicate that the status of the antecedents of young George Farquhar was indeed such as thus far suggested. The first, a document, asserts that the boy's father was 'an eminent divine of the Church of England in Ireland'. The next, the earliest printed account, records that George Farquhar was 'a gentleman by birth, descended from a very good family in Ireland'. And the third one that is near enough to the time involved to justify credence observes that 'his parents held no mean rank in Northern Ireland'.

As to the days of the infancy and earlier childhood of little George, not a jot of information exists. One can merely mention in passing that it was as well for his parents that Capel Wiseman reached Ireland when he did, for the newborn Farquhar had hardly come into the world when Essex was relieved of office, and in August 1677 had to return to England. But Dr. Wiseman stopped on, secure in his deanery at Raphoe, his career assured. No later than 1683, when the boy George was six years old, Wiseman was elevated to the bishopric of Dromore, that diocese of which a former bishop had collated the Rev. John Farquhar to Raphoe. Thence the town of Dromore was less than thirty miles away, and Farquhar and Wiseman were still able to continue in reasonably close touch with each other.

At precisely what period the clerical father of George Farquhar set about arrangements to 'put away' his son in a school is not clear. It is known only that the boy became a pupil of Ellis Walker, who was headmaster of the Free Grammar School of Londonderry. This school, in the town to which young George might lay some claim by right of birth, was the obvious choice.

Founded in the time of James I, in 1617, by a Londoner of the name of Matthias Springham, Derry School was one of the institutions that arose directly out of the plantation of Ulster. The Irish Society financed it in part; but, as it was the school of the diocese of Derry, the clergy as well contributed to its upkeep. Its pupils were mainly sons either of the clergy or of Army officers or other gentry; yet its

A BOY FROM DERRY

curriculum was so drawn, having regard to social, religious, and national life, as to attract the middle classes from the town, and such boys from the country round as those whose parents desired for them an education as well in divinity as in the classics.

For how many years was Farquhar a pupil there? Except during the Siege of Derry from April to July in 1689, when the school was almost certainly closed, and possibly until after the Battle of the Boyne in July 1690, this boy may have been a resident straight through its full course. On the other hand, he may have gained part of his earlier education either privately or at a minor school outside Derry.

However, two circumstances tend to signify that Farquhar was a pupil under Ellis Walker before the Siege as well as after the Boyne. Like any other grammar school of the time in Ireland, or in England, Derry as a rule took in boys not for a fraction of the course, but from the age of seven or eight, and if they 'stuck' to standard kept them until they were fit for a university. Again, the curriculum of grammar schools at this time shows that one of the three principal requirements in the third form, when the boys were about ten years old, was the reading of Aesop in the original Greek. Later in life George Farquhar, who was endowed with an uncommonly tenacious memory, did reveal when he happened to write upon the nature of comedy that he deeply knew his Aesop in Greek. 'Old Aesop,' said Farquhar, 'must wear the bays as the first and original author . . . he had his tyrant lion, his statesman fox, his beau magpie, his coward hare, his bravo ass, and his buffoon ape, with all the characters that crowd our stages every day, with this distinction nevertheless, that Aesop made his characters speak good Greek, and our heroes sometimes can't talk English . . . the first laureate was as just, as prudent, as pious, as reforming, and as ugly as any of (the critics) themselves . . . those very tales and fables which they apprehend as obstacles to reformation were the main instruments and machines used by the wise Aesop for its propagation, and as he would improve men by the policy of beasts, so we endeavour to reform brutes with the examples of men.'

These were impressions drilled into him, impressions which

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Farquhar had evidently long pondered. He had been well taught, and he possessed a precocity which responded to thorough teaching. It was in fact before his tenth birthday that this schoolboy displayed an aptitude for writing, in verse. If his 'poems', several of which he had written by this age, only reflected in the main the sober precepts instilled by masters in a grammar school, they also gave promise of a knack for euphony, as in these quatrains:

'The pliant soul of erring youth
Is like soft wax or moistened clay,
Apt to receive all heavenly truth,
Or yield to tyrant ill the sway.

Shun evil in your early years,
And manhood may to virtue rise;
But he who in his youth appears
A fool, in age will ne'er be wise.'

Unhappily the progress of this budding poet, wherever he was in these germinating years, must have been rudely interrupted by the ominous political and religious disturbances which in the late 1680's began to seep into northern Ireland. The countryside was astir against James II, a Catholic King.

Yet James gained a number of partisans who were men of influence. In 1687 Peter Manley, the new Dean of Derry, turned Catholic, carried certain of his people with him, and still retained the deanery. In the following year Ezekiel Hopkins, the Bishop, emulated the Dean. Nevertheless Derry at large swiftly became the stronghold of the Protestants of the North. When by December 1688 a siege of Derry was threatened, the town closed its four gates against the regiments of the advancing Lord Antrim.

This crisis naturally brought about dramatic changes in the lives of both staff and pupils at Derry Free School. In April 1689 the citizens of the town called in from Tyrone for their leader a stalwart clergyman, George Walker, rector of Desertlyn, Lissan, and Donaghmore; his arrival coincided with the departure of Ellis Walker the schoolmaster, who fled back to Yorkshire (whence he had come) to take refuge with an 'honoured uncle'. Joshua Pilott, usher at the school, had more stomach for a battle. He joined the regiment of

A BOY FROM DERRY

John Michelburne, whom William III had in February commissioned major, and whom Pilott as captain now prepared to aid in the defence of Derry. The school itself is said to have been turned into a horse-mill to grind corn for the citizens. Its pupils scattered.

Little George Farquhar, whether he was then at Derry School or not, presumably took refuge under his family roof in the country. Though he escaped the bloody siege of Derry which ensued during the next three months, he was yet living near enough to the centre of that horror to witness some of its attendant havoc. The troops of James II thronged the northern counties, pillaging the countryside. In the stark days following the preservation of Derry the enemy plundered and burnt the rectory of young Farquhar's father. According to later testimony the unfortunate man was 'burnt out of all that he had', and not long afterwards 'died of grief'.

His son George, though only in his thirteenth year, and though of a 'tender constitution', appears to have sworn vengeance, and to have looked about for an opportunity to fight. George's brother Peyton got away to Dublin, where he became apprentice to a stationer. But young George for his part was following the wars. By the time William III had landed in Ireland, in June 1690, this little fugitive from Derry is said to have volunteered with other boy enthusiasts not much his senior, and to have marched to the Boyne. One report, fanciful perhaps, has it that 'he first carried the colours' in the Army. That mere schoolboys could put themselves in any such position, with colours or without, may be questioned. Yet it is a fact that young William Cadogan, up from Dublin and on the battlefield as a cornet, was only fifteen. It has been testified that George Farquhar, at the Boyne, was 'under Colonel Hamilton'. Lord George Hamilton's command was the first regiment of foot in King William's army. Hamilton himself was no older than twenty-four.

Whatever young Farquhar's experience may have been at or near the Battle of the Boyne, he somehow got a very vivid impression of one of its heroes, the aged but able General Frederick Schomberg. Indeed Farquhar was made keenly

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

aware of the scene at the height of the battle when Schomberg suffered personal attack. Others from Derry were in truth on the spot at this moment, including the gallant preacher George Walker. One account says that Walker was going to the aid of the wounded General when he was himself shot through the body, and died almost at once.

But with victory decisive notwithstanding such casualties, and with the sovereignty of Ireland firmly determined, the surviving volunteers from the north, like Joshua Pilott the usher and his pupil Farquhar, were soon free to return homeward.

By 1691, the Siege of Derry having also faded into only a grisly memory, Derry Free School was able to make a fresh start. There were two masters now in charge of it, young men not long down from the university: Robert Bonner, of Trinity College, Dublin; and John Dennison, of Edinburgh. The school reassembled under favourable auspices. With Ezekiel Hopkins, the renegade, dislodged from the bishop's house, and Peter Manley, the Catholic dean, gone from the deanery and fled to France, a new ecclesiastical administration took hold in Derry. The incoming Dean was Thomas Wallis, the very competent Dean of Waterford, who at once entered his son Gilbert in the school. Still more welcome was the new Bishop, William King, a man of means, who was devoted to the question of education for both the clergy and their sons, as well as to the general enlightenment of the laity amongst whom he lived. One of the first things the Bishop did in Derry was to found a library, not merely for his colleagues and junior staff, but to be used by the gentlemen of the diocese.

The next step of Bishop King, in respect of the School, was to consider the matter of its head. He was not satisfied with the double mastership of Bonner and Dennison; to get the best results a single figure was desirable, and a somewhat older man. The Bishop thought of the fugitive Ellis Walker. Unlike Captain Joshua Pilott the usher, who had gallantly fought through both the Siege and the Boyne, Walker was certainly no heroic personage; yet the man did have a way with pupils, which was not to be gainsaid. It had further to be recognized that the late master, now aged thirty-one,

A BOY FROM DERRY

whilst living with his uncle Dr. Samuel Walker in Yorkshire, had well improved his time; he made a poetical paraphrase of the *Encheiridion* of Epictetus, which he dedicated to his sheltering kinsman, and published. In 1692 Bishop King sent funds of his own to Walker wherewith to return to Derry and resume the headship of the school.

With regard to young George Farquhar the other learned Bishop concerned, Capel Wiseman, Bishop of Dromore, is believed to have become guardian of the boy after his father died. Wiseman, says one report, promised to provide for George in that calling to which the Farquhars inclined: the Church. Any such decision necessitated a reasonably sound schooling. But young Farquhar had by this time shown that he was fit material for a university, and it was thither that his studies pointed him, in the direction, since he was not possessed of means to travel farther afield even had he desired, of Trinity College, Dublin.

At Derry School after the Boyne it was that George came more especially under the individual attention of the headmaster Ellis Walker; if the boy was a pupil before the war in the early forms, Pilott would have taught him most of the time, the work of an usher being to instruct the 'petties'. What sort of man was it that now took in hand the poetical pupil George Farquhar? Walker, himself a scholar of Trinity, Dublin, was no ordinary schoolmaster. Known for probity, diligence, and modesty, with which qualities he had a trick of ingraining young boys without inflicting punishment, he took a generous personal interest in each of his charges in whatever form they were enrolled. He believed in giving pupils 'much of letters and not too much of manners'. But perhaps most significant of all, Ellis Walker was extremely skilful in searching out and developing individual talent.

The pupil Farquhar who confronted him had a thin face, a high forehead, and not a strong voice; there was in the curves of his mouth some degree of sensitivity. One of the most credible physical impressions related of him is that he was 'naturally of a tender constitution'. But there was nothing particularly tender-hearted about him, except that in his own later description of himself he said he did not vex people for trifles, nor relish playing practical jokes. He

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

was seldom angry, and though diligent when alarmed, he could study only that which gave him pleasure in its doing. He made a distinction, as he afterward said, between idleness and taking his ease. Such a trait if displayed at school could have been the excusable day-dreaming of an imaginative boy, a thing to be encouraged by others, if they perceived the imagination. But George himself thought he was not pre-possessing, that something in his behaviour put people off. A juvenile Epicureanism might well have done so. When this pupil was older he said he hated pleasure that was got by too much pain. In Derry this would mean that permission to run round town of an afternoon was not worth the getting up of six pages of Valerius Maximus.

Yet the town had its attractions. Four miles up the river from Lough Foyle, it was built upon a great mound above a peninsula formed by a bend in the river. Derry was called the 'Acropolis of the North'. The land leading up to it looked hardly classic: a green bare long hill, with a windmill on a peak, and no houses, other than one lonely row along the ridge, lest the tides, as round St. Michael's Mount, wash over them. But Derry within the walls did not so much belie its name. While on the two sides water protected the town, ramparts eight feet thick enclosed it altogether, with bastions and demi-bastions, and the four great gates – Bishopsgate and Butchersgate, Ferrygate and Shipkeygate. The Protestant cathedral of St. Columba dominated the scene; indeed, Derry seemed to have grown there because of the cathedral. Not in the form of a cross, St. Columba's lacked a transept; but there was nothing stinted in its buttressed Gothic tower, which marked the region from afar for landsman and mariner alike. Round the cathedral huddled tightly-packed houses, though not so tight but that trees graced several of the streets, and edged a central square, or marketing-place, which was known as the Diamond. Here was a rendezvous for the boys from Derry School.

To his fellow-pupils young Farquhar, back from the wars, was doubtless a welcome addition. Amongst these pupils were John Strong, son of the commandant of troops in Derry; James Hamilton, whose father was a clergyman in

A BOY FROM DERRY

County Tyrone; and Gilbert Wallis, that son of the new Dean already mentioned.

The studies which they had to pursue were stiff. Subsequent to the Boyne, George Farquhar and his classmates may have had to finish at Derry most of the work of the three upper forms. The schedule of the fourth form in a grammar school at this period was laden with both Greek and Latin testaments, lest concurrent reading of Terence and Ovid slacken the rigour, not to mention a bit of English rhetoric then suffered to intrude. Through the remaining forms the boys hardly escaped any ancient author of note, whether epic, lyric, dramatic, forensic, historic, or aphoristic. From meditating upon Virgil to grappling with Plutarch, from declaiming Sophocles to chuckling with Aristophanes, from wars and wanderings with Homer to re-enacting the merry scenes in Plautus, on through Livy, Epictetus, Demosthenes, the wry dialogues of Lucian, and into that trio of percipient old Romans, Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, until in Pindar they struck the thorniest path of all, pupils toughened their minds to the point at which, if they learned nothing else, they did learn how to reason things out and to write out their reasoning.

Having discovered what a Pindaric was, young Farquhar during this severe course of preparation for the university seems to have drawn inspiration from Pindar with which to feed his own poetic impulse. The boy had not forgotten the stirring drama of the Battle of the Boyne. By way of commemorating that historic event he undertook a Pindaric upon it. He attempted an ode, a hundred lines of sanguinary verse, in lamentation of the fall of Frederick Schomberg. One of its shorter stanzas, the third of eight, read thus:

‘Gods! How he stood,
All terrible in blood:

Stopping the torrent of his foes, and current of the flood;
He, Moses-like, with sword instead of wand,
This redder sea of gore could strait command;
But not like Moses, to secure his flight,
But spite of waves and tides to meet, and fight.’

The poet Farquhar went on to compare his chosen warrior further to a god, to Samson, to Hercules, to the great tower of a castle. This expansive tribute he called ‘A Pindarick

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

on the Death of General Schomberg Killed at the Boyne'.

For a pupil still under seventeen to conceive and complete so sustained an experiment as an ode a hundred lines long, gory, cacophonous, unrestrainedly graphic though it were, was no small reflection upon the ruggedness of the teaching of Ellis Walker. He had 'sought out and developed the individual talent' of young Farquhar. The master could bring a pupil to the maturity of preparation. Such a man was at Derry School because he knew how to empower his charges to demolish the barriers to a university. In this he had succeeded before he fled the Siege; he was now succeeding again; already Farquhar's schoolmate James Hamilton had in 1693 qualified as a pensioner at Trinity College, Dublin.

In this year a certain John Farquhar is recorded as curate of Lissan, one of the parishes of which the intrepid George Walker, defender of Derry who was killed at the Boyne, had been rector. Lissan was in County Tyrone and in the diocese of Armagh; a small linen-making town, it lay about midway between the livings held in previous generations by George Farquhar when he was at Clones and by John Farquhar as Prebendary of Raphoe. The successor of Walker at Lissan, as rector, was Richard Crump, and since Crump like Walker was incumbent as well of the two parishes of Desertlyn and Donaghmore, he evidently needed the present John Farquhar as a colleague. While the identity of this Farquhar is not quite clear, he may have been an elder brother of young George. A few years later (1703) John Farquhar is listed in a survey of archepiscopal lands as tenant of Tamnehagan, which was in a townland forming part of Lissan parish; Farquhar is stated to have held '198 Irish acres', together with 'a pretty good farmhouse with a stable'. Whatever the kinship of John Farquhar and George, this evidence does further support the tradition that the clerical Farquhars were a family of substance in Northern Ireland. The later testimony that George Farquhar's father was 'burnt out of all that he had' may have been something of an exaggeration, inasmuch as the poverty of young George and of his known brother Peyton Farquhar, compared with the standing of John Farquhar of Lissan, could have arisen from their being younger sons.

A BOY FROM DERRY

It was in 1694, when the school career of impecunious young George Farquhar was nearing its close, that the predecessor of Ellis Walker at Derry, John Morrice, retired from the mastership of Drogheda Grammar School. At Drogheda they had heard of the 'probity, diligence and modesty' of Ellis Walker; they were aware, and they approved, of that principle in which he believed: 'much of letters and not too much of manners'. The inevitable call that Walker received to the vacancy at Drogheda created in Derry more regret than surprise. The town of Drogheda, only thirty miles from Dublin, enjoyed a patronage more varied, and it was part of a community from which sprang a larger number of able pupils than Derry could produce. Walker, giving due notice to his governing clergy, accepted.

For his pupil Farquhar, luckily, no further teaching in Derry was necessary. George, low in funds but high in intellect, was as ready to depart for Trinity College as Walker for Drogheda Grammar School. But the question of financing the pupil was difficult. No part of this burden appears to have been shouldered by John Farquhar the curate of Lissan; but Capel Wiseman, Bishop of Dromore, who wished George to read for holy orders, is said to have exerted his episcopal influence towards obtaining for the boy a sizarship at Trinity. Final consideration of this appointment arose when Farquhar succeeded in destroying the hydra-headed examinations that guarded the gates to the university. He was elected a sizar.

In the opinion of the present Provost of Trinity College, it is quite possible that a slip was made in the matriculation register with regard to the name of George Farquhar's father. Apart from the bare chance that someone at Derry School who sent in the particulars of candidates erred in this point, such a fault could well have occurred at the College. In those days the names of entrants, with details of their parents and teachers, were forwarded by the Tutor to the Senior Lecturer, who made the official entry. In many cases some time elapsed between the actual entry and the registering of the name, and it is wholly conceivable that the Tutor made a mistake. However, the one reference to a William Farquhar that has come down in history is inscribed in the

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

register, which reads: 'Georgius Farquhare, Sizator, filius Gulielmi Farquhare, Clerici'. The book further records that George was born at Londonderry, and 'ibidem educatus sub magistro Walker'. His age is given as 'Annos 17'. The date of the entry is July 17th, 1694.

As a sizar, an indigent pupil, George Farquhar had come down from Derry with the mark of the Irish invasion upon him, a son of a family broken up by the wars. All of the other pupils from Derry in his time, both those who entered Trinity before the Siege and those admitted after, were pensioners, boys in circumstances comparatively easy. But young George Farquhar, arriving wide-eyed in Dublin, was not put about by that. Upon a day in high summer, in mid-July, he duly handed over his caution money of £3 10s. od. at the bursary, and became a member of the university.

CHAPTER II

UNDERGRADUATE

IT was something of a triumph for the boy Farquhar to walk within the walls of Trinity College. At this period, standards of admission were stricter than at either Oxford or Cambridge, and many a candidate was rejected as 'not being scholar good enough'. Trinity had but recently celebrated with no small pride its first centenary; as late as the previous January the Provost, St. George Ashe, professor of mathematics and a man noted for his humanity, learning, and agreeable conversation, if not so much for his disciplinary rigour, had preached the centenary sermon, on 'The Duty of Gratitude'. George Farquhar, the long-faced freshman with the peculiarly mild mien and high spirits, was expected to be mindful of that subject when as a humble sizar he began — between bouts with Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, a book which the Provost required all undergraduates to read—his stated labours of sweeping and scouring, and of carrying tankards of ale to the Fellows in hall.

The college stood in a meadow at the outskirts of the town, beyond the walls. Farquhar found it arranged in three quadrangles or 'squares', the largest being the one opening from the outer gate. Between the two smaller squares, farther on, ran the hall and the butteries, while a whole side of one of these squares was distinguished as the library. Remaining sides, throughout the college, were far from edifices of marble, but consisted of about twenty three-story houses, all 'extravagantly timbered after the old fashion', and built-in chambers for the undergraduate body, numbering 250, all in residence. Each set of chambers sheltered two students; but the college counted its accommodations in 'hearths'. There were at this time 144 hearths in college. But to young Farquhar, outdoor attractions loomed probably more im-

portant, especially in July: there was a bowling green (where the tennis courts now are), and, within ten days of his arrival, quite as if to commemorate that impressive event, there was a fives-court put under construction at the east end of the Fellows' garden.

He was not all alone in a strange town, nor too bewildered in the company of the sixty-odd other incoming freshmen. James Hamilton, his schoolmate from Derry, had been in Trinity just a year, and could tell him the ways of the college; Peyton Farquhar, his brother, was still apprentice to Jacob Miller, a Dublin stationer, and could enlighten George on the ways of the town. But any fear of empty time on his hands was soon dispelled by the tutor assigned him, Owen Lloyd. This youngish man of thirty, whose subject was Divinity, enjoyed a sort of negative renown as being the Junior Dean insulted a few years earlier by a pupil named Jonathan Swift, the pupil having been suspended from his degree and compelled publicly to ask Lloyd's pardon. Owen Lloyd was known as a taskmaster. He made clear to Farquhar that anyone who hoped to gain emoluments above those of a sizar must earn them.

Undergraduates ranked in four classes, every student remaining in each class for four academic terms, or one year. The regimen was trying. Chapel required three appearances daily, at 6 and at 10 a.m., and at 4 o'clock vespers. To these devotions the rules added attendance on Friday and Sunday evenings at the elucidation of a text in Scripture by a Fellow or a resident tutor. Instead of breakfast after the prayers at 6 a.m., undergraduates got a lecture on science every morning. All dined and supped in common, in hall. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, each student took a lecture in Greek, the two junior classes at 9 a.m. But the rigour of it, for both teacher and taught, was that each pupil sat *daily* at the feet of his tutor, after which, just by way of recreation, the pupil had to get up an exercise in Latin. Daily, also, he was examined in the subjects of the previous lesson, and must pass before proceeding. Weekly he must show his tutor a commentary on the teaching of that week; also, either a Latin theme or a translation from English into Latin set by the tutor. This was the work for the Saturday,

UNDERGRADUATE

but not all of it; on both Friday and Saturday, after 10 o'clock prayers, students were required to declaim from memory in hall. Everything learnt received a hebdomadal hammering-in, a mode of study that conduced to the forming rather of deep scholars than of polite ones. Yet was this other than a continuation of the thoroughgoing pace which George Farquhar had sustained readily enough, in his years at Derry School? Ellis Walker, a Trinity man himself, knew what his pupils had to expect when they got into college.

The religious side at Trinity, with its summonses to chapel as frequently as to daily food, was not allowed to produce an effect too narrowing. Freshmen had also to look into Porphyry, the neo-Platonic philosopher, whose writings against Christianity they were to ponder. Religion thus led to logic, for training in which they proceeded twice in the year to read through Porphyry's *Isagoge*. When they advanced to the second class as Senior Freshmen they did the same with Aristotle's *Organon*. But this bow to logic did not stop with mere reading: on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons, from two o'clock until four, each class, even the incoming freshmen, disputed publicly in hall in syllogistic form on subjects taken from logic. At the end of each term, that is, four times a year, the strength of their reasoning power emerged in examinations, two hours long, not only in logic, but in natural philosophy, moral philosophy, Greek, Latin, and Latin prose. Two bad marks at any examination meant either demotion to the bottom of the class or degradation to a lower class, but with the privilege of regaining by diligence the rank lost. Even then the awesome teachers did not let up. At the beginning of each term, Junior Fellows and Resident Masters foregathered in hall, had the students of each class brought in, and examined them orally on the work of the previous term.

It would appear that George Farquhar, having put down his sizar's caution money of £3 10s. 0d. in the bursary on that July morning just after he had turned his seventeenth birthday, would find no undue leisure to dispose of, what with bearing tankards to the Fellows, themes to his tutor, and himself to divine services. Yet the college thought it essential to legislate for all against excessive liberty. George

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

discovered that he was not allowed outside college without a written pass from the exacting Owen Lloyd, and even then, only between two and four o'clock when disengaged, and between seven and nine in the evening. To enforce this seclusion a robust porter in a gown stood seneschal at the outer gate, which he kept locked. If Farquhar overleapt the rules of egress, he would be fined for 'town haunting'.

But it required of him small perception to discern, as is the case with all freshmen of normal vivacity, that if the college was his sweat-shop the town of Dublin was his playground. He needed no glimpse of the records in the college register to grow aware that many students were either admonished or expelled, for frequenting taverns, for rioting in the streets, for being drunk, for injuring citizens, for lounging and gambling in Dublin houses, and naughtiest of all, for whistling at ladies who turned out to be respectable. Counter-irritants to Porphyry and Aristotle ran strong. The penalty for these pranks fell summarily upon malefactors before the upturned faces of their own class mates in hall. However, such discipline exercised before the eyes of George Farquhar was not the only thing which perhaps tempered his spirits at the start. Scarcely had he been two months a member of the college when in September his patron, one might almost say his guardian and protector, Bishop Capel Wiseman, died at Dromore, too young, at fifty-eight.

Farquhar knew that both in memory of his father and on the word of Ellis Walker, if for no other reason, the Bishop would have seen him maintained as an undergraduate, no doubt even to the extent of making up any sum needed beyond the slender stipend of a sizarship, though perhaps expecting George to prepare for the Church. What was he now to do? A higher allowance of funds would soon be imperative. It behoved him at least to avoid 'town haunting', and whilst carrying ale to Owen Lloyd, the austere one, to drop no tankards. Indeed, a resounding exposition of Porphyry as Antichrist, delivered to his tutor in the form of a Saturday theme in Latin, might win favour.

He passed the autumn soberly enough, not extending his acquaintance with Dublin much farther than to cultivate friendship with a fellow-commoner, Richard Tighe,

UNDERGRADUATE

who had been born in Dublin, and who, like James Hamilton, had entered college just a year earlier than Farquhar himself had done. Tighe was a musician. As George later ornamentally put it, 'his generosity and easiness of temper was not only obvious in his common affairs and conversation, but more plainly evident in his darling amusement, that opener and dilater of the mind, Musick'. The lowly sizar was captivated by the polished fellow-commoner, just as every freshman is apt to single out for admiration an upperclassman of parts. Farquhar was, in fact, to reach the pitch of veneration for Tighe, 'a gay, splendid, generous, easy, fine young gentleman'. Something artistic in George himself responded to so accomplished a friend. It is likely that Tighe in turn was amused by Farquhar's verses, which the younger undergraduate continued to turn out after the fashion of his boyhood. When a riding-house in Dublin, with which both were familiar, metamorphosed into a chapel, George achieved an epigram thereupon:

A chapel of the riding-house is made,
We thus once more see Christ in manger laid,
Where still we see the jockey trade supplied,
The laymen bridled, and the clergy ride.

A more sombre occasion, the untimely death of young Queen Mary from small-pox at the end of December, brought forth between that time and her state funeral two months later the following:

Whilst heaven with envy on the earth looked down,
Saw us unworthy of the royal pair,
And justly claimed Maria as its own,
Yet kindly left the glorious William here;
The heaven and earth alike do in the blessing share;.
He makes the earth, she heaven our great allies;
And though we mourn, she for our comfort dies,
Nor need we fear the rash presumptuous foe,
Whilst she's our Saint above, and he our King below.

On the evidence of these two sallies into verse, in his eighteenth year Farquhar was happier in humour than in lamentation; yet at this time none would have disputed his suggestion of Heaven as the distributor of small-pox. Though it is not to be imagined that so respectful a tribute to the

late Queen and her relict drew any emotion from either Owen Lloyd or the college bursary, a coincidence is that at the scholarship examination early in 1695 Farquhar won an exhibition of £4. This award, acutely needed now that he could no longer count upon aid from the Bishop, somewhat lightened the colour of his outlook. A happier concomitant than the money itself was that its winner was now something more than an obscure sizar, a servant of those thirsty Fellows in hall; he was an exhibitioner; he had done well enough at his books for that.

Of the reading that he did, however, not all was in logic, or philosophy, or Scripture; like most undergraduates Farquhar had scanty taste for what he was *required* to do. He struck out for himself, and read Shakespeare; over and over he absorbed the lines of *Hamlet*. Students in his house began to call him 'dull and disagreeable'. Again he read *Hamlet*. To ignite the sprightliness of his nature, he needed what he called a 'congeniality of circumstances'; the classmates he thus far knew had not often provided him with that amiable stage-setting. One day he sent to borrow from a neighbouring hearth a copy of Burnet's *History of the Reformation*. Word came back that the possessor of it 'never lent any book out of his chamber', but if Farquhar would come to the room he should make use of the volume as long as he pleased. That was not what Farquhar was able to describe as a 'congeniality of circumstances'. Soon afterwards this fellow-student, when his fire was burning low, unhappily exposed himself to retort: he sent to borrow Farquhar's bellows. 'I never lend my bellows out of my chamber,' replied George. 'But if you please to come in, you shall make use of them as long as you will.'

Nor did Farquhar always stand in the best graces of his tutors. Upon a certain occasion he was required to write a college essay on the subject 'Christ walking on the waters'. Being engaged in diversions which otherwise absorbed him, he neglected doing that spot of work; but he appeared before his tutor at the hour set, and though empty-handed, offered to exercise his wits then and there. Lloyd gave him the chance. With somewhat reckless audacity Farquhar sat down and wrote out a discourse in which he developed a saying

more pat than proper: 'The man who is born to be hanged will never be drowned'. This no clerical tutor could possibly hear with indifference; the words 'atheist' and 'atheism' darted at the offender with something like a hiss; that college emolument of £4 per annum lay in jeopardy.

But it was rather as if the distinction of being an exhibitor had clothed him with a certain independence, with a garment of freedom in thought and action. One spring day, a day in May 1695, Farquhar joined four companions on an excursion to Donnybrook Fair. They were Edward Smyth, a pensioner who was in Farquhar's class; and Peter Fenton, Thomas Bayly, and Gamaliel Fitzgerald. This quintet were bent not upon town-haunting, but fair-haunting, which ought to put them outside the compass of observation. Donnybrook, on the river Dodder, was about two-and-a-half miles from town.

It was called the 'Bartholomew Fair of Dublin'. It was popular, national, excitably Irish, with a congress of ragged tents in and out of which ragged people made merry in ceaseless tumult, entertained by acrobats and rope-dancers on stages of planks. There was plenty to drink, and it was drunk, to the point of inducing many of the more festive ones to roll about on the grass, shouting, screaming, slugging one another in traditional Hibernian fashion. A familiar catch of unknown date painted the scene:

Who has e'er had the luck to see Donnybrook Fair?
An Irishman in all his glory was there,
With his sprig of shillelah and shamrock so green:
His coat spick and span new without e'er a spec,
A new Barcelona ty'd round his nate neck,
He goes to a tent and he spends half a crown,
Comes out, meets a friend, and for love knocks him down,
With his sprig of shillelah and shamrock so green.

They fought for the love of fighting rather than for love of each other; but the mass of the people were good-natured, gay, and highly expressive of Irish humour. Beggars on horseback, but without a saddle, and with a piece of twine for reins, begged from horseback, the horse so wretched that he added to the appeal. One later account noted that 'the women rode about, sitting two or three upon an ass, pushing their

way through the crowd, smoked with great delight, and coquetted with their sweethearts'. Pairs of grimy tattered lovers who had taken more than a few drinks could be observed steadying each other with the most exquisite politeness, quite outshining the acrobats as a side-show. It was as if the whole bedraggled throng had waited all year for the Fair to come round, and the louder the hubbub the more they enjoyed it.

Into this din of Donnybrook walked George Farquhar and his friends, blithely making their way. They came as 'young gentlemen from the university', and, as if determined not to be worsted in the event of a slight altercation, they bore arms. Weaving and jostling through the mob, these student adventurers did not long remain untouched by the little differences of view which the Fair so reliably bred. They fell into a dispute with a rustic. The dispute flamed into a row, and at once grew into an infectious battle of town and gown. Bayly and Fitzgerald were the protagonists, seconded by Fenton and Smyth, all with either daggers actually drawn or clubs swung about like flails. Farquhar, physically not fit for such a rough and tumble, nevertheless stood by in case of a call for reinforcements. In the thick of the fight another undergraduate, Richard Jones, son of the Procurator of Dublin, who had not come to Donnybrook with them but who saw his friends in danger, rushed in, flourishing a sword. By this time the yokel about whom the fracas had arisen fell, wounded. That ended this particular disturbance, and the centre of interest at Donnybrook Fair shifted to the battle next best.

The aftermath at Trinity College was in its own way no less dramatic. The six young gentlemen, apprehended, were in for an uncomfortable time. On May 28, the Vice-Provost and Senior Fellows, having actively gathered all the evidence of the brawl, met to measure out the punishment. Their deliberations resulted in this entry in the college register:

'Order'd That Smyth 3tius, Fenton, Jones Jnr., Fitzgerald and Bayly for wounding a man dangerously at Danibrooke, be admonished and confesse their faults upon their knees on Friday next in ye Hall, and that Fenton and Smyth be punished a months Commons to make reparation

UNDERGRADUATE

to ye person injurd. The same time it was ordered that Fitzgerald and Bayly be deprived of their allowance from ye House and that Farquaire be suspended of it.'

The four degrees of offence were apparent. Jones, the late arrival on the scene, suffered no actual penalty; Farquhar lost his exhibition for the time being; Fenton and Smyth had to go hungry for a month; while Fitzgerald and Bayly, forfeiting their scholarships for good, would probably have to withdraw from college unless they could raise their maintenance from other sources.

But the Vice-Provost and Senior Fellows, in drafting their formal decree of admonishment, in Latin, went more seriously into detail. 'It is plain to everyone,' the judgment read, 'how important it is to the honour of a College that it be not slandered in public, but that everyone should believe that in it morality is earnestly cultivated, and that all students are distinguished by purity of character. There is general agreement that Edward Smyth, Peter Fenton, Gamaliel Fitzgerald, Thomas Bayly, sinned grievously in this respect not only because they provoked disputes on their first appearance, but because armed with clubs and daggers they seriously wounded one of the yokels: on which account it has been decided by the Vice-Provost and Senior Fellows that the aforesaid Edward Smyth, Peter Fenton, Gamaliel Fitzgerald, Thomas Bayly, should be publicly admonished, and should humbly confess their crime in Hall on bended knees. Since Richard Jones, armed with a sword, had joined them as a comrade, in like manner it is decreed to admonish him publicly, and furthermore to fine the aforesaid Edward Smyth and Peter Fenton a month's commons, and to deprive Thomas Bayly and Gamaliel Fitzgerald completely of all emoluments which they receive from the College, and to suspend George Farquhar from the same, because being one of their number he had been prepared to further their designs. The Vice-Provost and Senior Fellows have decided to proceed with greater lenience on this occasion, but let them know that they will be removed from the College without further clemency if they should be guilty of any offence in the future.'

On the Friday, then, stipulated for the bending of knees in

hall, Farquhar was the only one of the six to escape punishment in public. While he had been no 'innocent bystander', he alone it was that had drawn no sword. Deprived of his exhibition, however, he was to revert indefinitely to what he could get from his sizarship. Meanwhile he could remain in Trinity College only as long as his behaviour so warranted.

Less than two months thereafter, on July 22, Dr. George Browne, a Northumbrian, succeeded St. George Ashe as Provost. Dr. Ashe had been appointed Bishop of Cloyne. But clearly, under this urbane but rather mild man, college discipline had tended to disintegrate. The unrest was not peculiar to Trinity; it was a heritage from the irregularities left in the wake of the Battle of the Boyne, which to a greater or less degree affected contentious factions in the whole of Ireland. As for the undergraduates in general, the incident at Donnybrook Fair hardly subdued those not involved in it. The new Provost, coming in at a difficult time, made at first no advance on his predecessor, at least within the walls of the college. As the year 1695 ran out, Dr. Browne, though a ruler both loved and feared, a man charitable to the deserving poor and kind to all, showed that he was not very expert in putting down riots. He tried hard to quell the variegated uprisings of his flock, even at bodily risk to himself; however, the students, whether in the company of their tutors or elsewhere, tended at intervals not far between to get out of control. In one imbroglio, a genuine Irish set-to, a brick hit the venturesome Provost on the head, putting him spectacularly *hors de combat*.

If at Donnybrook, in the spring, Farquhar had barely managed to keep out of serious trouble, at college in the ensuing autumn and winter he was discreet enough, more discreet than the Provost, to keep aloof from such escapades. Apart from the work he now had to do, a little more attentively, for the relentless Owen Lloyd, he need be no solitary. Two old schoolmates from Derry, Gilbert Wallis, son of the Dean, and John Strong, son of the Commandant of Troops, entered Trinity as pensioners this year, while two friends in the class above Farquhar, Richard Tighe the musician and Richard Jones the Procurator's son, both of Dublin, could add a little diversion in the town. On the

humbler side, there was always his brother, Peyton Farquhar, the apprentice to the printer. Yet from all these young George could be independent too, could strike out on his own, and in his eager curiosity about people could find no small amusement. He picked up acquaintance with a shipping merchant who invited him to a launching, after which the man had his young guest in to a bottle of claret and a neat's tongue. That was a gala day after Farquhar's own festive heart, an outing not within the frown of the Vice-Provost and Senior Fellows. Early in the new year his caution bore fruit. The college authorities, having met and meditated upon his case, his assiduity, his post-Donnybrook behaviour, wrote in the college register on February 1, 1696, this entry: 'The same day Geo. Farquhair was restored to his exhibition of which he was suspended'.

And yet, he had been 'town-haunting' more than they ever dreamed.

CHAPTER III

A C T O R

MORE and more, as he escaped from the college between 7 and 9 of an evening, George Farquhar was taking the same path: toward Smock Alley Theatre. To the discomfiture of the Fellows responsible for discipline, this theatre stood demoralizingly close to Trinity. Smock Alley ran between Fishamble Street and Essex Gate, at the rear of Lower Blind Quay; on the north side of the alley an arched passage led to the theatre, and between this passage and the college extended a lane which swarmed with undergraduates every night. 'They love the play,' later wailed Archbishop King of Dublin, 'better than study'. Farquhar was no exception.

Not alone was it the plays that were drawing him to Smock Alley in this winter of 1695-96; it was an actor, a man above all others in the company, Robert Wilks. Farquhar, aged eighteen, had never seen anyone like Wilks, aged thirty. Yet Wilks after having been more than four years on the stage was still only an actor in the making, young, erect, of pleasing personality, but with definitely a better ear for comedy than for tragedy. He appeared to have his choice of parts in the repertory, for he nearly always played the lead. To the admiring eyes of the undergraduate, Wilks seemed perhaps less an actor than a persuasive man of the world, a man who had seen London and profited thereby. He was a very hard-working actor, steadily letter-perfect in his parts; perfect as well, apparently, in the parts of all the others in every scene in which he figured. He was no wag, still less a buffoon, but a serious comedian, every way satisfying to his Dublin audiences. Since Wilks was at his best in comedy, Farquhar found fascination in the characters of plays of that sort, in the situations, in the turns of plot as interpreted by Wilks, and before the boy from Derry knew what was taking place

in his own mind his whole knowledge of literature, which by this time had reached no little width and depth, was centring upon the nature of comedy and the acting of it.

There had been no actor like Robert Wilks in Smock Alley when Farquhar first arrived in Trinity College. Earlier on, Wilks had played in this theatre, but had in 1694 gone off to London to broaden his experience; his recent return to Dublin, at the seductive salary of £60 a year plus a benefit performance, was an event. At the time Farquhar came under his spell, the younger man could have no way of knowing how far their antecedents had something in common, a fact which possibly accounted for part of the fellow-feeling that Wilks evoked in him.

Wilks himself was Irish born, at Rathfarnham. His father had fled to Ireland after the Battle of Worcester. Young Wilks was bred up a clerk, and became secretary to Sir Robert Southwell, vice-admiral of Munster. In England with Southwell in 1690, Wilks returned with him in the entourage of William III, when the King crossed to fight at the Boyne. Wilks was averse to fighting the Irish amongst whom he had been reared; but he was agreeable to joining the King's army as clerk to the camp. At the Boyne it is likely that the boy Farquhar did no more actual fighting than the young man Wilks; but, unknown to each other, they had been on the spot together.

Though Southwell was in 1690 appointed principal secretary of state for Ireland, and very fair prospects for Wilks in diplomacy were opening, after the wars the young man fell in with John Richards, a comedian, and the foreign service soon lost a promising recruit. For a pastime, Wilks took to reciting parts of plays with Richards. The actor was impressed. With the return of peace, the Dublin stage would offer a new opportunity. Richards took up the case of Wilks with Joseph Ashbury, who happened to be his brother-in-law, and who was manager of the theatre in Smock Alley.

This theatre had been built in 1660, as if to celebrate the Restoration of Charles II. Ashbury, who though born in London became a Lieutenant of Foot in Dublin under that King, got the post of Deputy-Master of Revels in 1662 when the Duke of Ormonde was Lord-Lieutenant; twenty years

later he was promoted to Master under Ormonde's renewed tenure, and then turned to professional acting. The wars interrupted his performances. But with the Boyne over and done, he formed an association with Richards, and the next thing Ashbury knew, in came Richards with Robert Wilks. Ashbury, by now fifty-three, was extremely knowledgeable in the ways of the theatre, and he hesitated. At length he let Richards persuade him to give Wilks a part not in a public show, but as Lorenzo the Colonel in a private performance of Dryden's *Spanish Friar*. Not realizing how good a teacher Richards had proved to be with this young reciter of parts, Ashbury was both surprised and pleased at the account Wilks gave of himself. The manager was holding a public jubilee night in 1691, to celebrate the Boyne, with a performance of *Othello* in which he himself was to play Iago, and straight off he gave Wilks the title part. The rest of the cast he collected from officers of the garrison. Again the playing of Wilks was marked; but he had little competition in the cast.

A few months later, in March 1692, Ashbury reopened Smock Alley Theatre, and to confirm his confidence, put on *Othello* again, retaining Wilks, and what was more, supporting him with a company from London. The ambitious young actor sustained the impression which he had previously made. In the event, for the next two seasons he remained with the players in Smock Alley, developing his abilities, acting some variety of parts, but not flowering into the finished performer. All this time John Richards was keeping a vigilant eye upon his protégé, sizing him up from his own point of view of comedy. Advising Wilks to have a try at the London stage, in 1694 Richards gave him a letter to the great Thomas Betterton, still in Drury Lane, and with no little avidity, Wilks left Dublin.

Betterton, doubtless plagued with a procession of young aspirants from outlying regions, all glowingly recommended by friends in the theatre, offered no premature praise to this man said to be already an actor. But he did arrange with Christopher Rich, the manager, to take Wilks into the company at a salary of 15s. od. a week, stipulating that since Wilks seemed lacking in grace he should spend half a crown of that sum weekly on dancing lessons. If Wilks was crest-

fallen, he did not wince; he did as he was told. In due course, his reward was to be assigned for his first appearance the minor part of Lysippus, in *The Maid's Tragedy*, by Beaumont and Fletcher.

After all the experience which Wilks had enjoyed in Dublin, he should have begun in Drury Lane with reasonable ease. He did perform passably until Act V, when he had to address the towering Betterton. Poor Wilks was so awestruck, even with the few lines of Lysippus, that he nearly 'dried up'. It was not a propitious début for the promising actor from Dublin. He could only protest, perhaps, that he had come to London to play comedy.

In time Wilks improved, although he 'got only insignificant parts'. One of his fellow-actors who commiserated with him was a man six years his junior, Colley Cibber, who did not suffer from awe, but who was equally getting only bits to do. There were, in fact, too many established actors in the company to leave much of an opening for younger men. Wilks had to work against odds. His name did not even appear in any of the new plays published. Little as he fancied his struggle to wring reluctant applause from the pit in London after he in Dublin had with ease captured the whole house, he did not take his difficulties too hard. On the contrary, he felt sufficient confidence in himself to go off and get married, his bride being Elizabeth Knapton, daughter of the town clerk of Southampton. Then he asked for higher pay. Betterton approved; the manager demurred.

At this point came an offer from the astute Joseph Ashbury, who by visits to London had been following the progress of Wilks, an offer nearly doubling his salary, and in addition the benefit which redoubled the doubling. When Wilks apprised Betterton, the manager as well was in the room, but said nothing. 'I fancy that gentleman,' said Betterton, pointing to the manager, 'if he has not too much obstinacy to own it, will be the first that repents your parting, for if I foresee aright you will be greatly missed here.' What did Betterton mean Wilks had in him that could be developed? Wilks went away wondering, but resolved to study, in order to get on; and he returned to Dublin, taking his wife.

It was upon such a man that young George Farquhar set

his eager eyes in the year 1696, in Smock Alley Theatre. With Wilks had come also Henry Norris, son of an old actor in Etherege comedies; Norris was to fetch out the talent of Wilks farther than London seemed to have succeeded in doing, and Farquhar was now witnessing this plan unfold.

Norris needed only to be looked at to provoke a laugh. He was a little man, with a little formal figure and a thin squeaky voice; and to emphasize his littleness he wore a coat too long for him. The best that Etherege had written into a comedy part was well within the reach of this gifted player. Taken together, Wilks and Norris were meant by Ashbury to be the stars of the Smock Alley company; it was in the interplay of their abilities that Farquhar began, though at the start as raw an amateur playgoer as anybody in their Irish audience, to discern the stuff which constituted dramatic situations.

Even with his college exhibition restored to him, this Senior Freshman, this seasoned undergraduate now nearing the end of his seventh term in Trinity College, found life within its walls growing a bit irksome. Saturday themes in Latin, disputations in hall from the Greek, readings in Porphyry and Aristotle, all these seemed a long way off from reality; on the other hand adventures in Dublin, not alone at the theatre, but whether in company of his brother Peyton or of friends like Tighe the musician or Jones the 'swordsmen', unlocked the charms of freedom. His tutors did not dissuade him from his restlessness. Owen Lloyd, the Junior Dean, engrossed in his own studies for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, which in 1695 he had just taken, had perhaps lost hope for an atheistical pupil who had got into a scrape at Donnybrook Fair, who when told to get up Aristotle had persisted in reading *Hamlet*, and who had at last even descended from Shakespeare to what—Etherege?

Peyton Farquhar now appears to have offered George some work as proof-reader in the shop of Jacob Miller. Little enough was the wage, barely sufficient to eke out bed and board. But how much more did a sizarship and a four-pound exhibition yield? George accepted the job. To get away from the college, to find this new liberty, would at least yield an unhampered opportunity, as often as he could save

pennies to pass the portals of Smock Alley, to see his hero, Robert Wilks.

While the date on which George Farquhar withdrew from Trinity is not precisely known, his name does not appear on the college register after February 1696, at which time the authorities restored his exhibition. He took up his work of reading proofs. But at that mechanical task he did not long remain. So strongly had the magnet of the theatre drawn him into Smock Alley that in due time the young enthusiast contrived to meet Wilks. Then ensued, with small delay, the course of acquaintance which Wilks before him had followed with John Richards. In Wilks, Farquhar rediscovered that 'congeniality of circumstances which fetched him out', and all the sprightliness, all the cordiality, all the spontaneity of his nature, so often damped when he languished in college, quickened to the personality of the actor who was by this time the idol of the Dublin audiences.

Wilks drew him out; the young renegade responded. 'In defiance to legs of mutton,' as Farquhar afterward put it, 'small beer, crabbed books, and sour-faced doctors, I can dance a minuet, court a mistress, play at picket, or make a paroli. . . . In short, Sir, in spite of the university, I'm a pretty gentleman. . . . You must know, Sir, that though I have read 10,000 lies in the university, yet I have learnt to speak the truth myself'. Wilks himself was no mean appraiser of wits. He put his youthful compatriot in touch with the appetent Ashbury.

The manager was no little pleased, in fact, to meet a 'young gentleman from the college'. It was not the way of Trinity to supply recruits for the stage; scholars did not become actors; it would be all the better for the theatre, perhaps, if some of the actors did know a thing or two. The upshot of this meeting between Ashbury and Farquhar was that the manager took the youngster into his company at a pound a week. That was more than Wilks, even after two years' experience in Smock Alley, had got from Betterton in London.

Whilst George Farquhar, who was allowed to 'have the advantage of a very good person, though with a weak voice', was tasting the delirium of his good fortune, he was no doubt

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

a bit startled to find himself assigned to the somewhat staggering part of Othello. Was it a good omen that Wilks had begun his career in the same fashion? At any rate Wilks was on the spot to back up his own judgment, to justify his own opinion, by coaching his pupil sympathetically.

Perhaps a reminiscence of Farquhar's first mingling with actors, and their comments upon his vealiness as an undergraduate, cropped out in a play which he himself later undertook to write:

BULLFINCH (*a landlady*): But I thought all you that were bred at the university should be wits naturally.

MOCKMODE (*a new young beau*): The quite contrary, madam. There's no such thing there. We dare not have wits there, for fear of being counted rakes. . . .

MOCK (*to a young Irishman newly in London*): My father was a Parliament man, sir; and I was bred at the college, sir.

ROEBUCK: Oh, then I know your genealogy; your father was a Senior Fellow, and your mother was an air-pump. You were suckled by Platonic ideas, and you have some of your mother's milk in your nose yet.

MOCK: Form the proposition by mode and figure, sir.

ROE: I told you so. Blow your nose, child; and have a care of dirting your philosophical slobbering bib.

MOCK: What d'ye mean, sir?

ROE: Your starched band, set by mode and figure, sir. Throw off childishness and folly with your hanging sleeves. Now you have left the university, learn, learn!

MOCK: This fellow's an atheist!

Even if he had left Trinity as an atheist and a rake, Farquhar in the hands of Robert Wilks and Henry Norris had still much to learn to fit him for the stage. But his ablest instructor proved to be Ashbury himself, who was still playing Iago, and because of five years of success in Smock Alley with this tragedy was confident that he could create a new Othello with a new recruit. Ashbury was considered the best teacher in the three kingdoms, if not the best actor, a man who by this time stood solidly on his own reputation.

Emboldened by the post-bellum prosperity of his company, he had invaded Drury Lane and abducted its best actors for Dublin. Wilks and Norris were only two examples. Ashbury had lately lured away also Price the tragedian, Tom Doggett who 'wore a farce on his face', and not least, the comedienne Charlotte Butler, disgruntled in London because they had refused her an increase of 10s. od. a week over a salary of £2. One most competent man Ashbury did not even need to entice: Richard Estcourt, a superlative mimic, came on his own. Eventually came also Benjamin Husband, William Bowen, Mrs. Mary Hook, and Theophilus Keen. Farquhar, now first coming under the tutelage of the manager round whom such artists clustered, faced a man tall, well-proportioned, erect, in his prime at fifty-seven, with a full, meaning, piercing eye, but with a sweet-toned voice which did not age. If anyone could teach a young gentleman from the university, as Othello, how to read 'Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors', it was Ashbury.

Yet the event hardly bore out the anticipation. The method of Ashbury, apparently, was to try out a novice first in a major and difficult part, and if the new man did well, he should be all the better in lesser parts to follow. But, on his first night as an actor, George Farquhar suffered badly from stage-fright. For a Smock Alley audience he was pleasing enough in personality; his gestures were natural, his cadences fell upon the proper words, and he had got up his lines without faltering. But with his 'tender constitution' he did not convey a portrait of the redoubtable Moor, eloquent, intrepid, hardened in battle. Perhaps Ashbury had expected too much of a boy of nineteen. The voice of Farquhar turned out to be thin; he lacked self-assurance and confidence; he failed to rouse the galleries. No ranting Othello was here, and Othello in the big scenes must either rant or remain unconvincing. From the stalls, which were generous, he 'did not meet with the least repulse'. But that was negative encouragement. It was possible that a lead in great tragedy, for a tyro whose nature inclined him to comedy, was for a beginning a miscast. When Ashbury put on Shakespeare again – the play was *Macbeth* – he gave to Farquhar only the minor character of Lennox.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

If it seemed to this apostate student that his very existence hinged upon Smock Alley, the continuance of Smock Alley certainly did not hinge upon him. The manager of so capable a company of players could afford to be indulgent. Regardless of the ruling humour of Farquhar, Ashbury tried his neophyte in more tragedy: John Banks's *Virtue Betrayed*, or *Anne Boleyn*, in which Farquhar essayed Rochford; Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, in which the role of Dion fell to him. Still, as the season of 1696 rounded out, he did get his chance as well in a comedy of those great Elizabethan collaborators, *The Scornful Lady*; here young Loveless was a character that admirably suited Farquhar in point of both age and disposition; he pondered it well. Going on with comedy, he next attempted the part of Careless, in *The Committee*, by Sir Robert Howard.

But the comic dramatist after his own heart remained Etherege. When Ashbury again put into rehearsal *The Man of Mode*, Farquhar not only for his own sake embraced the opportunity to enact Young Bellair, but rejoiced in being cast together with Norris as Handy and with Wilks as Dorimant, men from whom at every performance he could learn something. Other accomplished actors playing in Etherege at about this time included Richard Estcourt, William Bowen, Theophilus Keen, and Mary Hook. Altogether they constituted for Farquhar an exacting school. However, Wilks urged the boy to write plays, rather than to act. As for the successive audiences, while they still accepted Farquhar politely, he was drawing from them no uproar of applause. His person was graceful, his delivery sensible; but neither in voice nor in ease, it seemed, was he progressing toward the level of actors born. He continued 'subject to a timidity which precluded all boldness of exertion'. Yet he did play Young Bellair perhaps more agreeably than any other character.

Much as Farquhar may have wished to shun the heavier parts, Ashbury could not cast his recruit in comedy alone. Early in the year 1697 Smock Alley presented Dryden's *Indian Emperor*, or *The Conquest of Mexico*. This tragedy was already a generation old. The plot of it, as it unfolded in ponderous verse, was that Cortez and his two lieutenants

ACTOR

Vasquez and Pisano, having invaded Mexico, met with resistance from the Mexican emperor Montezuma and his sons Odmar and Guyomar. The plot took its twist from the unfortunate lot of Guyomar, since not only Vasquez the enemy, but Guyomar's own brother Odmar, sought to abduct Guyomar's wife Alibech.

It befel George Farquhar to appear as Guyomar, while the more seasoned actor Price played his rival Vasquez. The big scene occurred in the last act, when Vasquez, in a broil with Odmar over which one should possess Alibech, killed Odmar, whereat the unconsidered Guyomar ran in, and Vasquez offered Guyomar friendship – if no wife. At this moment Farquhar, as Guyomar, glitteringly armed, had to declaim in melodramatic sing-song:

Friendship with him, whose hand did Odmar kill!
Base as he was, he was my brother still:
And since his blood has washed away his guilt,
Nature asks thine, for that which thou hast spilt!

Here Farquhar, as he gave Nature what she asked for, was supposed to change his sword for a foil. But in the heat of the fighting, what with his habitual deficiency of stage-presence, he forgot. He ran his sword into the wretched Price, severely wounding him, and the curtain rang down in Smock Alley.

It was a little over a year since poor Farquhar had in real life participated in a somewhat similar scene, the wounding of a man, at Donnybrook Fair. But it was then, luckily, only his classmates Peter Fenton and Edward Smyth who had had to make reparation to the man injured. Nevertheless, to have been involved in two casualties in two consecutive years was enough to frighten Farquhar out of any spirit of belligerency which he possessed, stage or real. He was now overcome with distress and anxiety. He swore that he would never act again.

Whatever the capability, up to the moment, of George Farquhar as a player, this was cold news to Joseph Ashbury. Farquhar, if no star, had for certain attracted from Trinity College not a few responsive patrons of the theatre. But there lay Price, not exactly between life and death, yet off the stage for weeks, and Ashbury's company was depleted by two. The manager was magnanimous. Faced with the resignation

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

of the afflicted young man, Ashbury, within a month after the accident, promised him, in token of loyal services, not only a free benefit performance, but in addition 'complimented him with the charges of the house'. This was an act of most unusual generosity on the part of any management.

Price's wound fortunately began to heal; before long he was out of danger. Farquhar, now that his fellow-actor was convalescing, did feel able to think of his own benefit night with less revulsion. The capacity of Smock Alley Theatre was very likely about £100. Normally a manager deducted from an actor's benefit about £40 for house charges. But with that amount counted in, even if the house on this occasion was only half full, Farquhar must have parted from Smock Alley with a sum well over £50. He had never hitherto dreamed of so much money in his own possession.

At this point Robert Wilks, who had been closely observing his young friend for at least a year, and measuring his talents, again urged him not to desert the theatre, but to try playwriting, specifically the writing of comedy. He further assured Farquhar, as Richards had so truly assured Wilks several years before, that the place in which to improve one's talents was not Dublin, but London. Every Irishman of promise sought his fortune in England. Wilks was satisfied that George, whose conversation alone was so arresting, and whose education furnished him with undoubted pretensions, had in him something better than the reciting of parts invented by others. But he thought that Farquhar would not in Ireland meet with encouragement adequate to his merits. He persuaded his friend to set out for London whilst he still had money to support himself, and to cap this advice added a gift of £10 of his own. There was no further argument needed.

As soon as Farquhar ascertained that Price had nearly recovered, and could act again, he boarded a boat bound for West Chester.

CHAPTER IV

A Y O U N G M A N O F T H E *Coffee-Houses*

To set foot in England and to take coach down to London was to brave a town to him as different from Dublin as Dublin had differed from Derry. Apart from his education, his theatrical experience, and the guineas which a benefit had put into his purse, George Farquhar had in this year of 1697 no assets which anybody might envy him, except one: he was still under twenty years old. But again, as in the case of his leaving Derry for Dublin, where he had met up with his brother Peyton, George was not coming to a London in which he should be altogether without acquaintance. His family were conveniently scattered; he had a sister living in Chelsea, and with her he could tarry until he got his bearings.

This eager young Irishman, boy in years only, had in fact ample reason for confidence. What other university man, coming to London to write plays, had been also a professional actor? It was difficult, indeed, to think of anyone else with that double qualification. George Farquhar, as soon as he should be ready to sort into a plot what he saw, heard, and read, should begin with this distinct advantage: aside from his knowledge of literature, he knew what it was that fetched an audience. One thing only he still lacked: a taste of life in London.

Sooner or later he must encounter in Covent Garden other young men from Ireland: Charles Boyle, brother of the Earl of Orrery, who had been up at Christ Church, Oxford, at which time he quarrelled with the great Bentley of Cam-

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

bridge over the genuineness of the epistles of Phalaris, and was worsted – but the quarrel had already begotten Swift's *Battle of the Books*; John Hopkins, the boy poet, who had quitted Ireland for Jesus College, Cambridge, and was by this time a young beau of the coffee-houses, handsome, large-eyed, in silken jacket and fancy neckpiece; above all, from his own Trinity, Dublin, the young genius Congreve, as ambitious of fashion as of the fame which his applauded plays were in this very year giving him at both Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields. What would men of such stamp do for George Farquhar? Stir up in him, at least, an Irish sense of pride in emulation.

Under the fighting King William III, London itself was for Farquhar a fountain of opportunity. It was for him not merely a London of taverns and coffee-houses, of fencing and duelling, of gambling and cock fighting, of morning calls in the bedchamber and assignations at sundown in the park, of news-sheets single and rogue romances in three volumes, of shouting felons and raucous bawds carted through the streets, of lords and ladies taking tea at ten and not often heeding church bells at eleven, of men of the Army back from Flanders jeering at men for the Navy 'pressed' to the sea, of chairs by the score carried of a morning through the narrow lanes or of afternoon coaches by the hundred spinning round a ring in Hyde Park. These were things which the boy from the bogs was able to take in at first sight in his rambles in and out of doors. But he set out to rub elbows with London, with her customs, her districts grim and gay, her milling human kind; he meant to know the cries, smells, slums, gardens, animals, fads, games, phrases, costumes, news, tricks and stratagems, food and drink of London. If Dublin, in all her 'lousiness and laziness, misery and magnificence', had taught him the beginnings of adventure, the infinite parade of London was now to show him what the ends of it might be.

The centre for his promenades, for what he had come to see, to ape, to make his own and perhaps to improve upon, was Covent Garden. With all the confidence of his years short of twenty, with all the exuberance bred by his earnings as an actor good or bad, young Farquhar sallied forth, a

warm-hearted, busy-brained, high-spirited 'gentleman from the university', very observant of eye, with the long nose of inquisitiveness, dressing by preference in unobtrusive black, a thin-voiced gentleman with perhaps a few airs, a few affectations hanging over from the stage, but minded to 'steal no lap-dogs, tear no fans, break no china', and all in all, sportive, sprightly, now giddy, now volatile, and not averse to being somewhat rakish. Here was pleasant study for him in this London, and he was too idle to study unless the task was pleasant. Pleasure must come purchased without too much pain; when he laughed, it was from pleasure, not malice. But he had come from Ireland with almost the whole of his estate in his head. If in London he was to add to it, he would have to bend to gainful work a temperament compact of profanity and piety, coarseness and elegance, futility and cleverness – that seam of cleverness, however, which Robert Wilks insisted was there, lying beneath an odd mosaic of manner that Farquhar himself did not understand, and that frequently put off strangers who too highly esteemed their own first impressions. So in the springtime of 1697 this young scholar-actor laid siege to the heart of London, and if at the outset he did not quite know how to go about making the best use of his wits, he at least, as he later phrased it, possessed 'a body qualified to answer all the ends of its creation'.

It was a new London, newly built upon the ruins of the Great Fire a generation before. But, for Farquhar, it extended from Moorfields, in the midst of the region which the fire had ravaged, thence along an elbow of the Thames into a neighbourhood quite unscathed, as far as St. James's Park. Either end was famous for assignations. The new Bedlam Hospital lay 'sweetly placed' in Moorfields, so sweetly indeed that lovers at once made it their rendezvous, while in the other part of town Rosamond's Pond – the south-west corner of St. James's Park – had long been a spot favoured for love and poetry. Moorfields itself was a popular resort of tradesmen and petty merchants; the haberdashers walked there with their families, as in the adjacent Cornhill and Cheapside the cockney hosiers chattered of a Sunday and week-day alike. Round the Gun at the west end of St. Paul's,

or at the Ship in St. Paul's churchyard, huddled the booksellers and publishers – C. Brome, J. Taylor, B. Tooke. At their open stalls young Farquhar could look into the newest imprints of Jacob Tonson or of Sam Briscoe – the new *Virgil* of Mr. Dryden; re-issues of the plays of Mr. Wycherley; a tragedy, of all things, by gay young Congreve, called *The Mourning Bride*; and two comedies rather less than moral, *The Relapse* and *The Provoked Wife*, by Captain Vanbrugh. The first had seen Drury Lane only in December last, its chief character Lord Foppington, in which part Wilks's old fellow-actor Colley Cibber had captured the town. But the reigning hit, *The Provoked Wife*, had opened at the 'new house', Lincoln's Inn Fields, this very April, with Betterton and Mrs. Barry as Sir John and Lady Brute, and the alluring Anne Bracegirdle as Bellinda. This was the poetry of the hour, and this the dramatic literature being most read. In odd contrast to them, two books of popular fancy stood out: *The Practice of Piety, or How a Christian Should Live*, by Bishop Bailey, a new edition of which had appeared every year since the King James Bible; and *The English Rogue, or the Life of Milton Latroon*, in three volumes, calf's leather, by Richard Head. If by chance, leaving St. Paul's, a visitor turned south, he at once met with a corollary of it, the College of Doctors of Common Law, with a common table and dining-hall, which settled all ecclesiastical matters from heresy to divorce.

Right away from the other side of the cathedral ran Aldersgate. From it branched off Long Lane, a picturesque street, perhaps convenient for young Farquhar to know about, since it was abuzz with dealers in second-hand clothes. After debouching into Smithfield – scene in August of Bartholomew Fair – this lane wound away as King Street Cloisters, a centre of shops, exhibitions, and raffles. Down toward the Thames again Fleet Ditch, an open sewer, joined the river at Blackfriars; in Thames Street itself one walked amidst the warehouses and burlap; no lady could away with a lover who 'smelt of Thames Street'. He could with less risk go down Vinegar Lane, an unsavoury alley by Drury Lane, or even into Jermyn Street, not unknown to ladies of accommodating inclinations. With an eye to living

A YOUNG MAN OF THE COFFEE-HOUSES

in the midst of what he wished to observe, George Farquhar himself came to take rooms near Gray's Inn Lane.

Of such were the regions penetrated by a young actor retired, too frail for Othello, but a plausible Young Bellair, come to London to market his wits. Yet by these regions he was not circumscribed. Deep in the East End he made acquaintance with Shoreditch, where so many French refugees had collected themselves in Spittlefields after the Revocation, that thirty churches had to be built for them. To the West, beyond the common round of his rambles, he wandered as far as the trees and the promenade of Hyde Park. Nevertheless between Moorfields and St. James's it was that young Farquhar got into the habit of dining, supping, drinking his dish of Bohea.

There was the Smyrna Coffee-house in Pall Mall. One 'received acquaintance' at the Smyrna. The place had its cluster of wise-heads, especially political ones who from 8 to 10 every evening, from the left side of the fire to the door, the seat of learning being in the left chimney-corner, prepared their bodies with three dishes of tea and purged their brains with two pinches of snuff, then argued as much as they liked, 'let 'em fight dog, fight bear'. Over in Charing Cross there was Locket's, an ordinary with famous ragouts, newly-invented salads, and 'modish kickshaws for nice beaux'. Of this same Locket's Mr. Farquhar, after he had got to know it, let drop a descriptive word: 'Commend me to a boy and a bell. Coming, coming, Sir. Much noise, no attendance, and a dirty room, where I may eat like a horse, drink like a fish, and swear like a devil.'

Only two doors from Locket's, near Whitehall, stood the Rummer Tavern; it was kept by Sam Prior, who had there taught his nephew Matt, more precocious than scrupulous, to refill vats of Rhenish with cider. The Blue Posts, in Spring Gardens, was a haunt of the Jacobites, if one craved their company. St. James's, as well, had its share: the Thatched House, facing that street, was a large clubroom with wax candles in old glass chandeliers; low-built shops under the tavern included a hairdresser who charged 5s. od. for cutting the hair and rubbed in 'incomparable huile Macassar' from the island of Celebes. Ultimately, along in St. James's

Market, Farquhar did not overlook the Mitre Tavern, kept by Mrs. Voss. He liked both her dinners and her diners.

If he took in the other direction a turn down the Strand he arrived at the friendly threshold of the Princess's Chocolate House, near the New Exchange; if into Covent Garden, where he was sure to meet with theatrical folk of use to him, he chose a divan and tavern called Hippolito's. Down in the City again, in Laurence Lane, Cheapside, if he wanted the seamy view he could get it from the glum landlord of Blossum's Inn, where the carriers lay. The food was better at Pawlet's, Austin Friars, Old Broad Street, and better still at Pontack's, in Abchurch Lane. Pontack, son of a priest of Bordeaux, owned a famous claret district; serving his wine at 7s. od. a flask and dinners at 4s. od. to a guinea, he offered either a ragout of fatted snails or chicken not two hours from the shell; with these titbits did he tempt the epicures. But if he wanted to tempt young George Farquhar, the dish was a fricassee of rabbits.

Three places were notable for their gatherings at definite hours: the Sun Tavern after 'Change, the Devil Tavern after church, and the Rose, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, after the play. Of these, the Sun was just behind the Royal Exchange, while the Devil, a gable-pointed front between Temple Bar and Middle Gate, stood nearly opposite the church of St. Dunstan, and its sign depicted that good man at half-length pulling the Devil by the nose. The third place, the Rose Tavern, with its famous Wits' Room, was kept by the Widow Long. Here was a stop on the morning ramble as well as a scene for a midnight orgy; it was as good a tavern for challenging a wine-soaked man to a duel as for listening to a discussion in praise of noses – flat, sharp, Roman, hawk's, crooked, ruby, and brazen.

But a challenge to a duel was perhaps more likely to be heard by way of an evening pastime. One night, in the Fleece Tavern near the river, Farquhar encountered two gentlemen known to him, an orthodox believer and a dissenter, arguing upon a point of doctrine dealt with on the previous Sunday by their separate clergymen. The two disputers were drinking a bottle of 'new French'. As the debate warmed up, what with quotations from the Fathers as well as from Scripture,

the men raised such a row that a pair of wenches who usually plied their trade upon the stairs outside bolted in, thinking, as Farquhar himself put it, to 'sell their mackerel'. Upon the appearance of these little strumpets the arguers paused, and digressed into 'a topic of a more familiar nature'. But suddenly recollecting what was really on their minds, they ordered their interrupters to make off. Predestination, as the really serious subject of conversation, reasserted itself. As the debaters grew fuddled, their wrath waxed louder than before. At length they drew their swords. Had not a third gentleman, one Mr. Fern, then stepped in between, predestination had sent the first arguer to the devil and the second to the gallows. But they parted amiably. 'I'm sorry at my heart, dear friend,' said the one, 'that you won't go to heaven my way.' The comment of George Farquhar was terse: 'And so away he reeled to a bawdy-house'.

In all such taverns, cut and long-tail, Farquhar found his London. All of them he frequented, for each had something in its individual way to put into the wallet of his memory; in them he met with the puff-wigs, and in their company he paid his club of friendship. But it was in still another place that he could find at a given moment the largest gathering of 'ingenious acquaintance', catch the spirit of the King he had fought for as a lad at the Boyne, and hear the critics of drama, poetry, or any other literature that faced public scrutiny. This was Will's Coffee-house.

It stood at the corner of Russell and Bow streets, inviting all who passed between Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Built in the time of Charles I, only now, in the 1690's, had it grown fashionable, owing to the heightened importance of its location, to its preferred tea and coffee, and to the personality of its host, Will Urwin, himself a wit. At 3 o'clock, the popular hour, the wits assembled in their room on the first floor above the street, sat at narrow tables, and over their bowls of coffee and their long pipes discussed love, learning, and politics. In the early months of 1697 talk of the drama ran high, for scarcely had the arguments about the morals in Vanbrugh's *Relapse* cooled off in Drury Lane when the same author stoked them up again with *The Provoked Wife*, produced in April at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Probably

between the one comedy and the other it was that George Farquhar put in his first appearance at Will's. He could not sit in the philosopher's corner, nor yet in the corner given over to the wits; but he could at least mingle with the rabble, the parcel of boy-faced beaux in red stockings. He had only to listen. This was what he had come to London to hear.

The armchair of honour, to the left of the fireplace, of course belonged to John Dryden. He was aging now, sixty-six, rather bloated, a bit sleepy-eyed, but was not too haughty to bring to Will's a little table-book in which he noted down what the critics called the flaws in his plays. Near him, and second to him only in deference received, sat Will Wycherley, nine years Dryden's junior, still handsome, but past his prime of both mind and body, and content to be known by the name of his lusty comedy, *The Plain Dealer*, popular in Drury Lane for a generation. The next group younger were John Dennis, Captain Vanbrugh, and William Congreve. Dennis had just put on a lamentable play called *A Plot and No Plot*; but the flood of applause for *The Provoked Wife* at the other theatre quite swamped it. He was learned, but crabbed; a born critic, but a man who wanted to prove that he was a playwright. Red faced, poor, living in a garret, Dennis amused Dryden and Wycherley by his fluent discourse, his tremendous scowls, and his cannonading of the lesser wits. On the other hand both Vanbrugh and Congreve were living in society, pets of the town, good-humoured and sprightly men who talked as they wrote; Vanbrugh's leading lady, Anne Bracegirdle, a minx of nineteen, was Congreve's mistress; but the two dramatists made of it no quarrel.

If George Farquhar had no other introduction to these luminaries of Will's, he got it from his old compatriot John Hopkins. This young poet, with the curls of his puff-wig falling on one side half-way down his chest, and on the other tossed over his shoulder, having before he entered Cambridge preceded Farquhar to Dublin, had as a child of twelve fallen immersed in love with a little girl whom he called 'Amasia', an intimate of the Duchess of Grafton. They played together as children. But as they grew older Amasia rebuffed John, to marry 'a country booby of her own rank'.

A YOUNG MAN OF THE COFFEE-HOUSES

Notwithstanding that, Hopkins had found in the girl his literary inspiration, and was even now writing poems to a lock of her hair, to a box of her patches, to a bit of embroidery from her gown. At Will's he welcomed Farquhar with joy, and in immediate verse prophesied for him a place where

‘Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Wycherley must sit,
The great triumvirate of comick wit.’

A bit older than Hopkins and Farquhar was Walter Moyle, a Cornishman, who after Oxford and the Middle Temple had progressed through the coffee-houses from Maynwaring's in Fleet Street, to the Grecian, and now to Will's. Moyle was noted for his acuteness, his subtle irony, and the exactness of his reasoning. He had translated Lucian, had published letters written between himself, Congreve, and Dennis. At Will's he liked to argue from Aristotle and Horace why imitation pleased, and to explain poetry by way of painting. Dryden thought Moyle had learning and judgment above his age; in earshot of Farquhar he was at present debating not exactly the arts, but that a standing army was against a free government.

Nor was the company at this rendezvous of Will's without its folk from the theatre. Joe Haynes, the wit of Drury Lane, was there. For twenty-five years he had fulfilled the most comic parts that could be written for him, animating no little the wit of that triumvirate named by Hopkins as the writers whom Farquhar should one day join. From the great Sparkish in Wycherley's *Country Wife*, to Syringe, the ludicrous doctor in *The Relapse*, Vanbrugh's recent success, Joe Haynes had built and held his reputation, a Molière of comedy, if he could have written like Molière. Nor did his usefulness end there. He was in constant demand to speak prologues and epilogues; those he wrote himself possessed little wit; but his art in delivering them – in this year of 1697 he spoke a prologue from the back of an ass whose head was enwreathed in laurel – excelled that of everyone. Like Congreve and Vanbrugh, Haynes had threaded his way through society, which he touched with a wand of fun. But his tongue it was that proved mightier than his pen, and drew from Colley Cibber the remark, ‘A fellow of wicked wit’.

Cibber himself, with whom Robert Wilks had played during Wilks's memorable apprenticeship at Drury Lane, was another man of the stage whom Farquhar found in this coffee-house, a man much nearer his own years. They called Cibber 'hatchet-face'; he was of middle size, fair skin, thick legs, clumsy shape. But Cibber had got on in these last two years faster than Wilks had. To perfection Colley acted a coxcomb, because he was one; his vanity overtopped that of actors themselves. His value to the theatre, however, lay in his talent so to absorb himself in a character that he seemed not even to be Cibber. In the year just past, as no one had a part for him, Cibber wrote a play of his own, *Love's Last Shift*, and acted his own part of Sir Novelty Fashion, a part without wit, but with a catching smartness and vivacity. Of more interest to young George Farquhar it was, as he arrived in London, that Vanbrugh had then stepped forth, lifted Novelty Fashion to the peerage as Lord Foppington, and cast Cibber in *The Relapse*, which was a sequel to Cibber's play. Sequels are rarely successes. But the talent of Vanbrugh ensured for Cibber as Foppington an instant hit, and Cibber was now secure as a character actor.

Others, younger and older, to be discovered in the coffee-house exchanging badinage with Will Urwin were John Oldmixon, Tom Durfey, and the Hon. Charles Boyle, brother of the Earl of Orrery. Boyle was just twenty-one; though born in Chelsea he was M.P. for Charleville in the Irish House; in London he was still ranged with the wits, against Bentley of Cambridge, in defence of modern learning. Oldmixon, two or three years older, was a pamphleteer from Somerset, a scribbler for a party; but he aspired to poesy and the drama, as if he feared he must qualify himself for Will's. He had in 1696 produced a little book of Anacreontics, and was now about to offer *Thyrsis, a Pastoral*. More amusing than either of these men was Durfey, a Huguenot song-writer. Contemporary of older men like Dennis, Tom Durfey was a fellow who produced a play a year, none of them wholly bad. He had been a favourite of the last three kings, one of whom leant upon his shoulder to sing his spirited jingles. 'The town may da-da-da-damn me as a poet', stammered Tom, though perfectly fluent when he

sang, 'but they s-s-s-sing my songs for all that'. He was always mellow, never drunk, always reduced to his last penny, yet like Falstaff attended in the streets by a page. Mirthful was Tom, but neither malicious nor revengeful. When Tom Brown, who did give rein to malice, bitterly lampooned him – 'Thou cur, half-French, half-English breed' – Durfey thought it a huge joke, declaring the laugh to be on his side. Dryden, just after Durfey had staged a most hopeless play, observed, 'You don't know my friend Tom; he'll write worse yet'. But Durfey knew himself, and did.

The other Tom, Tom Brown the lampooner, was a younger man, now in his middle thirties. Like Charles Boyle he had been up at Christ Church, whence he had just escaped expulsion when he wrote 'I do not love thee, Dr. Fell'. Coming to London, Brown continued to dislike people, in particular many unoffending gentlemen whom he met at Will's, where he attacked in writing everyone from Durfey up to Dryden. But they, like the Oxford college, were indulgent; they merely called Brown the 'mongrel of Parnassus', a label to him considerably more damaging than the cross-breed by which he had designated Durfey. Indeed there was something canine about Brown's quarrels; he sank his teeth into them again and again, never letting them drop. His satires, to which he worked himself up by translating the bawdier parts of Petronius and Lucian, were rather coarse than witty. Less a gentleman but more a scholar than the usual run of wits at Will's, Brown frequently withdrew to low taverns in Gower's Row, where in slatternly mistresses and roaring companions he seemed to find what he wanted of 'life'. As the present year of 1697 was wearing on, Brown, having written a play, was in view of his failure to get it acted whipping himself into a fury worthy of John Dennis. This play he somewhat sanguinarily called *Physic Lies A-bleeding, or, The Apothecary Turned Doctor*.

It so happened that young Farquhar had managed to reach the fringe of such company at Will Urwin's before an event which rather dislocated ordinary life overtook London. On September 29 the Peace of Ryswick was signed. The armies of William III demobilized. Troops poured back to town, disbanded officers and men alike, and found no employment.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Many lapsed into the life which they would certainly have followed had there been no wars, the life of rogues or beggars, whilst during the winter severe hardship ensued. Farquhar witnessed this hardship, acutely; he in fact narrowly escaped it himself, what with his funds from his benefit dwindling apace. 'One farthing to the poor old soldier, for the Lord's sake', as Farquhar was soon to write, of a begging cripple. And the man besought could only reply, 'Begging from a generous soul that had not to bestow, is more tormenting than robbery to a miser in his abundance'.

Farquhar himself aspired to experience in the other side of life, whilst taking care to observe the whole. Not only had he by this time gained opportunity to slip into this other side, so far as his acquaintance admitted him, but he saw it accurately reflected on the stage in Drury Lane by Captain Vanbrugh. *The Relapse* was in this year presented again and again. Its characters and situations, in particular Berinthia a young widow and Loveless a libertine, deeply impressed George Farquhar. Again, better than any historian could write it, Colley Cibber as Lord Foppington was making history with his lines on a wit's progress round the clock:

'I rise, madam, about ten o'clock. I don't rise sooner, because 'tis the worst thing in the world for the complexion; not that I pretend to be a beau, but a man must endeavour to look wholesome, lest he make so nauseous a figure in the side-box the ladies should be compelled to turn their eyes upon the play. . . . Now if I find 'tis a good day, I resolve to take a turn in the park, and see the fine women; so huddle on my clothes, and get drest by one. If it be nasty weather, I take a turn in the chocolate-house, where, as you walk, madam, you have the prettiest prospect in the world; you have looking-glasses all round you . . . from thence (at three o'clock) I go to dinner at Locket's, where you are so nicely and delicately served that, stop my vitals, they shall compose you a dish, no bigger than a saucer, shall come to fifty shillings. Between eating my dinner and washing my mouth, ladies, I spend my time till I go to the play (at six o'clock) where till nine o'clock I entertain myself with looking upon the company, and usually dispose of one hour more in leading 'em out (at ten). So there's twelve of the four-and-

A YOUNG MAN OF THE COFFEE-HOUSES

twenty pretty well over. The other twelve, madam, are disposed of in two articles: in the first four I toast myself drunk, and in t'other eight I sleep myself sober again.'

Indeed the theatre was the life of London as the Circus Maximus was the life of Rome in the days when Ovid took his ladylove to see the spectacle in the arena, but not to look at it. In Drury Lane the frugal young Farquhar either took a seat in one of the two galleries where congregated impecunious young beaux down at heel, or stood behind the scenes where he was admitted as a member of the profession. Not for him the side-boxes, nor the promenade which with its ladies of quality surrounded the pit, nor even the pit itself with its backless benches. But what he saw during a performance was that women in the side-boxes gossiped, beaux walked about the house chattering, ogling, and laughing, or sitting on the stage, orange-girls ran round selling both their wares and their souls, women of the town, masked, set their caps at gallants in the pit, footmen in the high gallery wearing their masters' linen raised a continual din, and the only part of the theatre which seemed aware that a play was in progress was the middle gallery, populated by the usually neutral and always prosaic middle part of the city. Drury Lane was a picnic for the beaux and the women, but not so much for husbands. The state of society at the turn of the year 1697-98 drew from Ned Ward, the sour journalist, this comment: 'Ladies looked like undaunted heroes, fit for government or battle, and gentlemen like a parcel of fawning flattering fops, who bore cuckoldom with patience, made a jest of an affront, and swore themselves faithful and humble servants to the petticoat, creeping and cringing in dishonour to themselves, to what was decreed by heaven their inferiors, as if their education had been amongst monkeys, who give pre-eminence to their females.'

In this setting, from which the town at large often seemed a very copy of the theatre, there occurred in March 1698 a social explosion. The middle classes had been returning to the social life of London; they did not like their legacy of the theatre as left by Charles II; and they found a spokesman. He was one Jeremy Collier, a clergyman from Cambridge, and a lecturer at Gray's Inn; and the explosion which he

touched off he called *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*. Collier came down hard upon Dryden and Wycherley, Congreve and Vanbrugh, 'their smuttiness of expression; their swearing, profaneness, and lewd application of Scripture; their abuse of the clergy; their making their top characters libertines, and giving them success in their debauchery'. It seemed to him that the only intent of such authors could be to tincture the audience, to extinguish shame, and to make lewdness a diversion. 'Goats and monkeys,' he said, 'if they could speak, would express their brutality in such language as this'. He selected for the sharpest barbs of his rhetoric no other play than one to which George Farquhar was particularly attracted – *The Relapse*, of Vanbrugh. But Collier stept almost equally hard upon the comedy of Congreve in which Cibber first won the notice of that author, *The Double Dealer*. 'There are,' boldly observed the reverend crusader, 'but four ladies in this play, and three of the biggest of them are whores'.

It seemed that everyone who could read did read this pamphlet. As the mass of these readers were quick to exclaim, ingredients of error and of exaggeration streaked the *Short View*. Collier charged profaneness where none was intended. He accused the stage of the immorality of which it was only the reflection. He presumed to pick literary faults in authors who knew more about literature than he could ever begin to know even about holy writ. Nevertheless, the *Short View*, be it said in short order, shocked everyone into thinking. Some imagined they could hear, ever so faintly, in this spring of 1698, the knell of license beginning to ring. Its reverberation, which spread far, could not be dissociated from the church.

Dryden did not reply, except late and indirectly in a paper on another subject, wherein he confessed a certain degree of profaneness, and let Collier have his little day. Wycherley remained serenely unmoved, indifferent. Congreve sent back abuse, but for once with neither wisdom nor wit. Vanbrugh, essaying a *Vindication*, seized upon a flaw or two in Collier, but was unconvincing. Whereupon Collier returned to the charge with his *Defense*, intending to crush both Vanbrugh and Congreve. At this point the lesser poets

sailed in, John Dennis, Tom Durfey, even Elkanah Settle, the 'City Laureate'. But if their betters had failed in retort, what chance had they? Collier only attacked again, with spears of invective. When a performance of Congreve's *Double Dealer* next came on, followed soon by one of Vanbrugh's *Provoked Wife*, both with some of their smoky passages struck out by their authors, all and sundry acknowledged that the semi-sophisticated clergyman had scored.

Not since the Battle of the Books, waged among others by Swift, Bentley, and Boyle, had any controversy so shaken literary London. George Farquhar got into the thick of it every time he visited Will's Coffee-house. Vanbrugh had published his *Vindication* in June, and the other rebuttals came tumbling along like echoes. Of an August evening, as young George Farquhar set forth to Drury Lane to see a performance of the play in which he himself had last appeared in Dublin, Dryden's *Indian Emperor*, and in the part of Guyomar had nearly killed his fellow-actor, he could not avoid falling into the Collier debate at the very door of the theatre. The opinions which he and the others then voiced Farquhar set down as if in a diary:

'Next evening to the play, where meeting some of his ingenious acquaintances, viz. Mr. W(ycherley), Mr. H(opkins), Mr. M(oyle), with others of that Club (Will's), there arose a discourse concerning the Battle between the Church and the Stage, with relation to the champions that maintained the parties. The result upon the matter was this; that Mr. Collier showed too much malice and rancour for a churchman, and his adversaries too little wit for the character of poets; that their faults transversed would show much better, dullness being much more familiar with those of Mr. Collier's function, as malice and ill nature is more adapted to the professors of wit. That the best way of answering Mr. Collier was not to have replied at all, for there was so much fire in his book, had not his adversaries thrown in fuel, it would have fed upon itself, and so have gone out in a blaze. As to his respondents, that Captain Vanbrugh wrote too like a gentleman to be esteemed a good casuist; that Mr. Congreve's passion in this business had blinded his reason, which had shone so fair in his other writings; that Mr.

Settle wanted the wit of Captain Vanbrugh as much as *he* did Mr. Settle's gravity; that the two answers to Mr. Collier have done his book too much honour, but themselves too great an injury. In short, upon the whole matter, that whoever gained the victory, the stage must lose by it, being so long the seat of the war. And unless Mr. Dryden, or Mr. Wycherley, remove the combustion into the enemy's country, the Theatre must down, and the end of this war will be attended by cashiering the poets, as the last peace was, by disbanding the army.'

Their argument continued until with the drawing of the curtain the first scene of the *Indian Emperor* began. Then young Farquhar spied in the front box a lady whom he had made his mistress. He had good reason for not following the play too attentively; but he left his friends in order to go and entertain the lady.

CHAPTER V

ADVENTURE INTO

Comedy

FARQUHAR had now been living in London well over a year. If his resources were running low, he probably supported himself by odd jobs which he picked up in the theatre. On the basis of whatever introductions he had brought to London, whether from Ashbury or from Wilks, it was with Drury Lane and Christopher Rich, not with Lincoln's Inn Fields and Thomas Betterton, that he associated himself. He had not forgotten the purpose for which Wilks had urged him to leave Dublin. Sustained by the faith that such an actor had placed in him, sensitive to his new surroundings, absorbed by the life which he everywhere observed and in which he was participating to the fullest, young Farquhar was rapidly taking in all he needed to know of the framework of play making: character from Wycherley, dialogue from Congreve, situation from Vanbrugh – all being enacted before his apprehending eyes.

In setting about the actual task of dramatic authorship this young scholar-actor from Ireland followed a plan of his own. He did not begin, in this summer of 1698, by just sitting down and writing a play, as his older contemporaries, whether actors or poets, seemed to have begun. Farquhar, in the desultory reading which he had lately accomplished between escapades in London, had come upon a translation of the *Roman Bourgeoise*, by Anton Furetière, published in England – perhaps in the hope of a larger sale – under the alleged authorship of Paul Scarron, the dramatist husband of Mme. de Maintenon. Struck by an idea of combining the scheme of this *roman* with a yarn of his own experiences round town, a yarn at least semi-autobiographical, Farquhar

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

now undertook to write anonymously what he called *Adventures of Covent Garden*. It was meant to be sold, to earn for him a little money; but it was no mere exercise in prose; it was a manipulation, deliberately attempted, of the materials of comedy. Out of the *Adventures*, later, Farquhar might conceivably fashion a play in his own style.

The design of *City Romance*, as the work of Furetière was called in English, lent itself readily to the purposes of the young adapter. It related the amorous entanglements of a number of stock characters in French life of the day. 'I sing the amours,' Furetière began, 'of certain citizens of Paris of both sexes'. He dealt in particular with a 'City Lucrece', who was more intent upon founding her fortune than upon settling her love; also with her lover Nicodemus, and with Angelica, a young woman intellectual. Farquhar by this time knew well their counterparts in London. As he changed the scene from Paris to London he needed only to add on or lop off characteristics to fit his sketch to the life in which he himself moved. He had personally played a great part in the adventures which he was about to relate. 'Et quorum pars magna fui' – he quoted Virgil on his title page.

Farquhar set down his characters as if for a play:

PEREGRINE, a young Beau addicted to poetry and the stage.
(This was himself.)

A CAPTAIN, in love with Emilia.

LORD C., also in love with Emilia.

A PORTER.

EMILIA, a runaway young wife from Ireland, and Peregrine's former fiancée there.

SELINDA, in love with Peregrine.

Dedicating his piece 'to all his ingenious acquaintance at Will's Coffee-House', Farquhar got to work upon it. Of such acquaintance, within the past year, he had gained no small number, from whom, as well as from the stage, he had learnt something of the art of the drama. In a preface, he said he was 'admired by the ladies for his discretion and secrecy', and that he 'took this means of confirming their good opinion of him'. To offset prejudice, he next assured his readers that he was neither Collierist, Poet, Aesop of Tunbridge (Tory), Aesop of Bath (anti-Jacobite), Dragon

ADVENTURE INTO COMEDY

of Bow (Protestant), nor Grasshopper at the Exchange (Catholic). That is, in religion at least, he remained approximately what he was at Trinity College accused of being, an atheist; at the same time he was non-political, and in questions of propriety on the stage, non-controversial.

While the Collier controversy had drawn Farquhar within its orbit of debate, he fought shy of letting it affect anything he might write. Certain views upon it (recounted at the end of the last chapter) which he had gleaned from a discussion of the wits, he might well embody in *Adventures of Covent Garden*, but only in order to make this little book topical, with chit-chat on the modish subject of the day. Wit, he reminded his readers more prophetically than he knew, he should omit from his writing; it had 'grown too dangerous and scandalous since Collier'. There was Farquhar's personal, and satirical, criticism of the *Short View*. Again, 'being within the City Liberties', he said, 'I must not be too facetious until I know whether the new Lord Mayor is Protestant, Catholic, or whatever'. Since his remarks on Scripture had in Dublin provoked some little stir, he was now mindful of wariness even in anonymity.

The budding author did not pretend to write a 'probable' story. Truth being less probable than fiction, he confessed he laid no claims to invention, and 'if turns of plot seemed incredible, he could only say he could never have thought of them unless they had really happened'. The *Adventures*, in truth, consisted largely of pranks which he, George Farquhar, had either played or observed. Of his characters, Emilia alone knew him; if she exposed him, he would reply in kind. But he so drew her that 'her cunning would be more admired than her falsehood hated'. For love of her, he smiled at her worst designs, and his reflections on her deceit 'did not make him forget the respect due her as a fair lady'.

Having thus divulged his own views to the extent needed to make himself clear, Farquhar, as Peregrine the dramatic poet and beau, set forth upon his prose experiment with the materials of comedy. Because of the crucial bearing of the *Adventures* upon Farquhar's later work, it is necessary to look into this effort in considerable detail.

Peregrine was standing behind the scenes in Drury Lane one evening in late August (1698) when the doorkeeper handed him a message from a lady. At the door he found Emilia, from whom he parted in Ireland because her parents had made her marry another. (The parallel here was perhaps not so close to Farquhar as to his friend John Hopkins, whose 'Amasia', married to a rival, had left Ireland for England, although she had in this year forsaken England as well, and gone with the Duchess of Grafton to Paris.) Emilia took Peregrine to her lodgings, the Black Posts, Bow Street, telling him she had left her husband for Peregrine's sake. The Black Posts was embarrassing for Peregrine; it was opposite the lodgings of his new mistress Selinda, whom he designed to marry to repair his fortunes. But Emilia, his first love, for the moment drove Selinda out of his head. Peregrine went in with Emilia and passed with her several pleasurable hours.

Upon leaving the Black Posts, he walked to the Rose Tavern, where within the limits of discretion he told his story to the wits. In the company sat a certain Captain, who exclaimed that he too possessed a superlative mistress in Bow Street, the prettiest lady in England. Peregrine, sure that the Captain meant Emilia, resolved to put Emilia to the test.

Day after day he returned to her lodgings, but never found her in. Selinda he seemed to have forgotten; but it was inevitable that she should espy him in her street, and wonder why he had not called. At length she sent her footman to intercept Peregrine at the Black Posts, and to fetch him to her. When Selinda catechised her lover, he offered a woeful evasion that she had jilted him for the Captain. This she denied. Peregrine then pretended fury at the Captain for 'affronting' him, and vowed revenge. But Selinda pleaded that it would really be nicer to go to Bartholomew Fair, for a raffle in the Cloisters.

At the raffle they met Lord C, with a masked lady. All joined in the game. Lord C won first prize and handed it to his companion, while Peregrine won a bit of china, in turn tendering it to Selinda. At this moment the masked lady revealed herself as Emilia. Peregrine at once saw jealousy in

both women, and to stifle their anger he dropt the china with a crash.

Although this young man of poetry and plays had come to the Fair resentful of a Captain whom he only supposed in love with Emila, his discovery of her with another rival, a Lord, altered neither his designs upon the Captain nor his fervour for a woman who appeared fickle. It merely caused Peregrine to hate two men instead of one. Upon Selinda, all this was lost. She and Peregrine left the Fair for home. His distraction she thought was no more than his prior hostility to the Captain, and she advised him to forget the man.

Regardless of Selinda, Peregrine determined to kill the Captain, then deal with Lord C in turn. Sending a porter with a note to the Captain, Peregrine challenged him to a duel behind Montague House at 6 a.m. on the morrow.

For his part, he arrived on the field in good time. Whilst waiting, he tried to argue against himself that he never loved woman, nor hated man, nor owned mistress, nor feared enemy. For two hours he paced, in angry soliloquy; no Captain came. Chagrined, Peregrine made off, resolving after all to forgo Emilia, to beg the Captain's pardon, and to marry Selinda with due speed.

Unhappily as he passed just once more down Bow Street he could not refrain from looking up at Emilia's window. There, confirming his direst suspicions, he beheld the Captain in his laced coat with Emilia, familiarly. Rushing upstairs, Peregrine was to his amazement met by Emilia, who embraced him, and begged him to rescue her from Lord C. Peregrine, hearing in his confusion a person pass down the staircase, saw disappearing only a porter; he then swore to Emilia he had just seen the Captain with her. 'That,' countered Emilia, 'was Lord C's footman.' She calmly opened her chamber-door and showed a man wearing a coat which Peregrine had imagined was the Captain's. Emilia then ordered the 'footman' to go back to Lord C, and say she rejected his attentions. Upon such evidence of fidelity, Peregrine fell weeping at her feet.

After an interlude Peregrine withdrew. As he passed to the street he came upon a porter loitering (really the Captain, in porter's clothes). Peregrine, mistaking this man for him to

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

whom he had entrusted his challenge to the Captain, and believing the creature had failed to deliver it, beat him. Then Peregrine walked away to Will's.

His victim mounted the stairs to Emilia, and demanded his clothes. 'Why,' she replied, 'I have just sent the porter to you with them.' In truth the porter had slipped out of the back door with the costume for himself.

The perplexed Captain then tried to slink home by mean streets. Turning into an alley, he was descried by the porter's wife, who recognized the outfit of her husband, and thinking him waylaid, screamed at the Captain to give up those clothes. A mob gathered. The Captain cried out that he was an officer in the Army. Then stepped forth a burly butcher, who asked to see the Captain's commission. The wretched man did not have it on him. 'Disbanded rogue!' exclaimed the butcher, and haled his captive forthwith to a magistrate in Drury Lane. The magistrate bound the prisoner over for trial at the Old Bailey.

Meanwhile Peregrine had gone off to see *The Indian Emperor* (the play in which Farquhar himself had so unluckily acted), and at this play he joined Selinda. They discussed no erotic adventures, but the sober subject of the dramatic unities, Selinda taking the view (Farquhar's own) that the unities of time and place were outmoded.

It is clear that Farquhar took the hint of Selinda from Furetière's Angelica, the literary lady, just as he drew Emilia in part from the 'City Lucrece' of the *roman*.

Neither Selinda nor Peregrine paid any heed to the tragedy on the stage. But just as Guyomar (erstwhile Farquhar) spoke these verses,

'That love which first took root will first decay,
That of a fresher date will longer stay.. .'

a masked lady plucked Peregrine by the sleeve, and whispered that she found those sentiments very true. He knew her to be Emilia. At once he forgot both Selinda and the dramatic unities. If Peregrine had here behaved as men usually did towards masks, with freedom, with carelessness, Selinda would have suspected nothing. But the voice of Emilia always cast a spell, which in the presence of others betrayed

ADVENTURE INTO COMEDY

Peregrine, and in this case Selinda, for her part, concluded it was high time to drop so wavering a gallant.

Yet the polyandrous Emilia was herself in no position to take up with Peregrine. She had a rendezvous with Lord C that very evening. Soon he arrived, and finding her with another man, went ablaze with jealousy, just as the rash Peregrine did upon seeing Emilia turn abruptly from him in an attempt to soothe Lord C. The end of these contretemps was that Selinda discarded Peregrine, both Peregrine and Lord C discarded Emilia, and Peregrine resolved to avoid the whole sex forever.

Emilia, not at all put about, on the next day wrote to Peregrine for a loan of 20 or 30 guineas. More in curiosity than in anger, he obediently made his way to the Black Posts, found Emilia sitting up in bed, desperate, melancholy, but remediable within no more than 10 guineas. Then she implored him to help her win back Lord C, by writing her letters to him, and Peregrine, just for the literary exercise, assented.

In answer, Lord C once again turned up, but to demand why at the theatre Emilia had dallied with Peregrine. She glibly replied that Peregrine was what was called a 'necessary lover', a man who in all innocence escorted ladies, his service being to cover their faults and to defend their honour. Lord C retorted that Peregrine had too much sense to be such a fool. But because Peregrine was an 'ingenious' man, Emilia explained, a man who could be in love without loving, who imagined such a woman's love real because its object was worthy, and who had his word accepted because ingenious men were oracles – for these reasons Peregrine was willing, and the reputation of the woman remained intact. Cunning as Emilia was, Lord C was wary, and lest she make a fool of him as well, claimed her love without more evasion.

Peregrine, continuing to write Emilia's letters, was amused to read Lord C's answers, full of wit and passion. These he memorized. Whenever he left the lady, he wrote them down, having withheld as well copies of his own answers. Noticing that Lord C's letters were always very respectful, Peregrine reckoned that the man had not really advanced beyond the point which he himself had reached in favours from Emilia.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

He was wrong. The crafty Emilia had warned Lord C not to mention her favours. Whilst the unsuspecting Peregrine, as amanuensis, tried to win her over, Emilia artfully made excuses for delay.

How long this would have gone on is difficult to imagine had not four men of law suddenly waited upon Peregrine. They led him to the Old Bailey, to hear the trial of none other than the Captain, for the murder of a porter. As he entered the court the first thing Peregrine heard was the fatal sound: Emilia's voice again. She had been summoned as a witness for the Captain.

The cat was now out of the bag. Emilia, having to declare that she made the Captain change clothes in her chamber, revealed the whole story. This determined Peregrine not only to forsake her once for all, but to save Lord C from her. His method of rescue would be to publish both Emilia's letters to Lord C and the answers.

In these *Adventures* were all the familiar utensils of the comedy of manners: the flirtatious wife, the less attractive heiress, the swaggering officer of the army, the amorous peer, the rascally porter, and not least, the town gallant (Farquhar himself) who gets embroiled with the lot of them. The action swung upon the usual devices, whether probable or preposterous: the rival women confronting each other, the rivaling men doing the same, the uncompleted duel, two men changing clothes, mistaken identity (twice), climax at the theatre with two pairs of characters entangled, and above all – perhaps the driving thought behind Farquhar's impulse – the one deceitful woman who makes game of every man that crosses her path.

He injected the element of jealousy more than he needed to have done, for the action rested less upon jealousy than upon calculated competition. The weak dénouement, the letter-writing and letter-copying, was nothing more than a declaration of Farquhar's own, incident to his own intention to publish, withholding names, a packet of letters which had passed between certain women and himself, not from any little revenge, but to get funds to live on. The *Adventures* also served to give his views on the Collier controversy, as well as to set forth his first ideas upon dramatic construction,

the limited usefulness of the unities in modern playwriting, and the place of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Dryden as opposed to the Greeks. Farquhar was thinking of dramatic composition; no sooner had he finished this hodge-podge of a pamphlet, than he set to work upon a comedy of his own.

To arrive at this pitch of creative ambition he had been in no hurry. For nearly two years now he had lived his life in and out of the London theatre. Not only had he swung into the stride of it, but, when he came to write a play, he had seen how vital it was to study the mood, the prejudice, the appetite of the public at a given moment. When he first came to town, playgoers were absorbed in Vanbrugh's *Relapse*, and the grim failure of John Dennis to compete against that comedy, with his *Plot and No Plot*, was a warning to young Farquhar to let the vogue of the *Relapse* die down before he, unknown to Drury Lane, should himself launch his first effort. Then Collier, in the spring of the present year, had again set the public agog with his *Short View*. But Farquhar believed enough months had now passed to enable him to disregard both Vanbrugh's success and Collier's philippic, and, as if neither had ever been written, he proceeded in late autumn to push forward his own idea of a play — his apprentice play.

The popular catch-word of the day in the title of a comedy was 'love'. Not only had both Etherege and Wycherley used it earlier, but more recently, Congreve and Cibber, as well as twenty or thirty lesser dramatists. Farquhar decided to continue the fashion with *Love and a Bottle*, the two things, indeed, which occupied most of his own time, and therefore the things which he knew most about. A good start, in fact, was just to put himself on the stage, even with his own Christian name, as George Roebuck, 'an Irish gentleman, of a wild roving temper; newly come to London'. In Roebuck the author was not averse to revealing his own condition: his poverty, his animal spirits, his tolerance, his sarcasm, and a certain inclination to turn soldier. For a foil, Farquhar added Ned Lovewell, also Irish, but for some time in London at the Inns of Court, and who as a man of means had provided the indigent Roebuck with clothes and funds —

a not unlikely explanation of Farquhar's own actual source of livelihood for some months past.

There was no concealment; Farquhar cared not two straws whether the audience should identify his principal character with himself. Without conceit he thought himself an interesting character who led a life worth writing about, not the life of the glossy libertine so familiar in Wycherley or in Congreve, but the doings of a rollicking adventurer, heedless, flighty, yet warm of heart and high in spirits, whom misfortune failed to sink and whom danger could not dishonour.

Upon this beginning the play was scarcely a departure from the common. Farquhar made Lovewell's sister, Leanthé, in love with Roebuck, follow Roebuck about disguised as a page. Wycherley, Aphra Behn, repeatedly Shakespeare, had used the same thin trick. In *Mockmode*, a butt of both Roebuck and Lovewell, 'a young squire from the university setting up for a beau', Farquhar drew upon both Molière and Trinity College. Also, in the minor characters for comic scenes – a poet, a bookseller, and especially Rigadoon and Nimblewit, dancing and fencing masters – he freely dipped into *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. The heroine, Lucinda, a lady of fortune, was a stock figure, as was Bulfinch, a landlady, who housed the young squire, the poet, and a whore who had followed Roebuck from Ireland. With such characters, nearly all of whom had crossed the path of young Farquhar in the two years last past, the author had merely to get on with his dialogue, which he could shape from his own life, and vivify in the crucible of his fancy. For George Farquhar was not Roebuck alone; he was partly *Mockmode* from the university, partly Lyrick the poet, even Pamphlet the bookseller, and from what he had seen, heard, and acted he knew well enough the comic aspects of both dancing and fencing masters. But even as Roebuck, he put himself in eight of the twelve scenes in this five-act play.

To start the play off well in Drury Lane on this night in early December, Farquhar got his madcap friend Joe Haines to write him a prologue. Remembered for twenty-five years as Sparkish in *The Country Wife*, freshly remembered as Syringe in *The Relapse*, Joe was still in higher repute as a maker of propelling prologues than as an actor. But the

ADVENTURE INTO COMEDY

man selected to speak the present lines was George Powell, for, known by his excessive devotion to women and wine, he fitted the title of the play. Such passionate love did he make on the stage that Vanbrugh always feared for his actresses when Powell enveloped them; as for wine, after having drunk a mistress's health from six o'clock in the morning he came before the curtain of a night well primed. These endearing qualifications, as Joe Haines shrewdly knew, only fitted Powell the better to launch young Farquhar's maiden piece. When George Powell made his entrance, followed by a servant with a bottle, everyone was delighted as in the course of twenty-five lines this expert tippler took three big drinks amidst such verses as these:

But our new author has no cause maintained;
Let him not lose what he has never gained.
Love and a Bottle are his peaceful arms;
Ladies, and Gallants, have not these some charms? . . .

Likewise Joseph Williams, cast for Roebuck, had earned his place, for he too was fond of the bottle. Williams had played well in Dryden, Congreve, and Cibber. Opposite him, as Lovewell, was John Mills, another man favoured for his acting in *The Relapse*. His character also was like that of Lovewell, for Mills was diligent, honest, quiet, careful, and useful on the stage by reason of his grace and his tenor voice. In the third important part, Mockmode, the young squire, came William Bullock, still another recruit from *The Relapse*. He was later described by Dick Steele as an actor with an agreeable squall and very dextrous at jumping over a stick. Indeed Bullock, a big man with a lively countenance, was a gleeful soul, vivaciously comic, and the more striking because his opinion of himself was humble. He was perfectly paired with William Pinkethman, as Mockmode's servant Club, for 'Pinkey', a droll rather than a comedian, was known not only for his 'graceful shrug', but for his 'talent in getting under a table'. Pinkey, again, had won fame in *The Relapse*. (It was as if Farquhar had intently studied the work of the entire cast in Vanbrugh's hit, and built his own play round the talents of the lot.) Benjamin Johnson, as Lyrick the poet, was yet another actor from that source, a sound, judicious, competent man, tall and thin, with 'large speaking blue eyes

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

which never wandered'. To cap this galaxy, Joe Haynes doubled in the parts of the bookseller and the dancing-master. The women, on the other hand, formed no such array of proved experience, although Jane Rogers and Maria Allison were fairly equal to their tasks as Lucinda and Leanthé, while Powell's wife stepped well into the part of Bulfinch the-landlady.

The heroine, Lucinda, was a proper enough young lady for her times. It was not Lucinda who in the opening scene in Lincoln's Inn Fields was picked up by a gentleman; it was she herself who picked up Roebuck, slapping him with her fan:

LUC: Are you then one of the wise men of the East?

ROE: No, Madam; but one of the fools of the West.

LUC: Pray what do you mean by that?

ROE: An Irishman, Madam, at your service.

LUC: Oh horrible! An Irishman! A mere wolf-dog, I protest.

ROE: Ben't surprised, child; the wolf-dog is as well natured an animal as any of your country bull-dogs, and a much more fawning creature, let me tell you.

(Lays hold on her.)

LUC: Pray good Caesar, keep off your paws; no scraping acquaintance, for Heaven's sake. Tell us some news of your country; I have heard the strangest stories, that the people wear horns and hoofs.

ROE: Yes, faith, a great many wear horns; but we had that, among other laudable fashions, from London. I think it came over with your mode of wearing high topknots, for ever since, the men and wives bear their heads exalted alike. They were both fashions that took wonderfully.

LUC: Then you have ladies among you?

ROE: Yes, yes, we have ladies and whores, colleges and play-houses, churches and taverns, fine houses and bawdy-houses, in short, everything that you can boast of, but fops, poets, toads, and adders.

LUC: But have you no beaux at all?

ROE: Yes, they come over like the woodcocks, once a year.

LUC: And have your ladies no springes to catch 'em in?

ROE: No, Madam; our own country affords us much better

ADVENTURE INTO COMEDY

wildfowl. But they are generally stripped of their feathers by the playhouses and taverns, in both which they pretend to be criticks; and our ignorant nation imagines a full wig as infallible a token of wit as the laurel.

LUC: Oh Lord? And here 'tis the certain sign of a blockhead. But why no poets in Ireland, sir?

ROE: Faith, Madam, I know not, unless St. Patrick sent them a-packing with other venomous creatures out of Ireland. Nothing that carries a sting in its tongue can live there. . . .

Those in this first-night audience who knew George Farquhar at all knew that he was here twisting his story out of the life he had lived in Dublin, why he had left Ireland, what he had been doing in London since he came. They also discovered that in Drury Lane a new master of sprightly dialogue had arrived, expressive of fun, vivacity, and freshness of phrase, and with an ear close to the life round him.

In Act II, the audience grew aware that while Farquhar was certainly no convert to Jeremy Collier at the moment, he did introduce a character whose restraining influence upon license Collier would have approved. Lovewell in his lodgings was trying to make Roebuck cease being a libertine:

LOV: I have one request to make, that you would renounce your loose wild courses, and lead a sober life, as I do . . . to prevent the inconveniencies of which, I'll provide you an honourable mistress.

ROE: An honourable mistress! What's that?

LOV: A virtuous lady, whom you must love and court; the surest method of reclaiming you . . .

ROE: A very fine retrenchment truly! I must first despise the honest jolly conversation at the tavern for the foppish, affected, dull, insipid entertainment at the chocolate-house; must quit my freedom with ingenious company to harness myself to foppery among the fluttering crowd of Cupid's livery-boys. The second article is, that I must resign the company of lewd women for that of my innocent mistress. That is, I must change my easy natural sin of wenching to that constrained debauchery of lying and swearing. The

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

many lies and oaths that I made to thy sister (Leante) will go nearer to damn me than if I had enjoyed her a hundred times over.

LOV: Oh Roebuck! Your reason will maintain the contrary when you're in love.

ROE: That is, when I have lost my reason. Come, come, a wench, a wench! A soft, white, easy, consenting creature! Prithee, Ned, leave mustiness, and show me the varieties of the town.

But the 'varieties' soon concentrated upon Lucinda, the young heiress, in whose house Lovewell's sister Leante was serving (in disguise) as a page. In Act III the flashes of Farquhar himself, as in the person of Roebuck he advanced upon Lucinda, came through repeatedly:

'Had I as much gold in my breeches as brass in my face I durst attempt a whole nunnery. This lady is a reputed virtue, of good fortune and quality; I am a rakehell rascal not worth a groat, and without any further ceremony am going to debauch her.' When Lucinda entered, 'Wonder not, Madam, at the power of your eyes, whose painted darts have struck on a young and tender heart which they easily pierced. . . .'

'Oh, traitor!' muttered Leante, peeping from a curtain. 'Just such words he spoke to me.'

But the comment of Lucinda herself, upsetting enough, was upon George Farquhar (not upon Roebuck) sitting there in the pit in Drury Lane:

'I suppose, sir, you are some conceited young scribbler, who has got the benefits of a first play in your pocket, and are now going a fortune-hunting.'

Yet the new tone in this play, which for all the scorn of Farquhar for Jeremy Collier emerged in the wake of Collier's attack, was sounded by Leante's comment upon Roebuck, as she stood alone after listening to the scene between Lucinda and him:

'Wild as winds, and unconfined as air. Yet I may reclaim him. His follies are weakly founded, upon the principles of honour, where the very foundation helps to undermine the structure. How charming would virtue look in him, whose behaviour can add a grace to the unseemliness of vice.'

ADVENTURE INTO COMEDY

Farquhar was responding to the currents of the time. But he was showing cleverness of another sort as well, precocious worldliness, judgment of manners. Seldom had any young dramatist so realistically made material out of his adventures: such an assortment of characters speaking such lively dialogue in such a diversity of incidents. Not only in Roebuck was he projecting himself upon the stage; he equally held up the mirror to his own life in the character of Lyrick the poet, in particular during the talks of Lyrick with his landlady Mrs. Bulfinch:

BUL: Mr. Lyrick, what do you mean by all this? Here you have lodged two years in my house, promised me 18 pence a week for your lodging, and I have ne'er received 18 farthings, not the value of that (*snaps fingers*) Mr. Lyrick. You always put me off with telling me of your play, your play – Sir, you shall play no more with me; I'm in earnest.

LYR: This living on love is the dearest lodging – a man's eternally dunned, though perhaps he have less of one ready coin than t'other – there's more trouble in a play than you imagine, Madam.

BUL: There's more trouble in a lodger than you think, Mr. Lyrick.

LYR: First there's the decorum of time.

BUL: Which you never observe, for you keep the worst hours of any lodger in town.

LYR: Then there's the exactness of characters – –

BUL: And you have the most scandalous one I ever heard.

LYR: Then there's laying the drama – –

BUL: Then you foul my napkins and towels.

LYR: Then there are preparations of incidents, working the passions, beauty of expression, closeness of plot, justness of place, turn of language, opening the catastrophe – –

BUL: Then you wear out my sheets, burn my fire and candle, dirty my house, eat my meat, destroy my drink, wear out my furniture – I have lent you money out of my pocket.

LYR: Was ever poor rogue so ridden? If ever the Muses had a horse, I am he – Faith, Madam, your Pegasus is jaded.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

BUL: Come, come, Sir, he shan't slip his neck out of the collar for all that. Money I will have, and money I must have; let your play and you both be damned.

The autobiography in this scene was patent enough. It was now close upon two years that Farquhar had lodged in London with somebody. His lodging was the kind that one could get for just about 1s. 6d. a week. He had no money, he was poor, he had indeed been living on love, and he had long been writing a play, this play, *Love and a Bottle*. The dialogue here, raillery though it was, revealed many a point of dramatic construction which Farquhar at the moment was thinking about: the unities, character, incident, style, plot, the rise and fall of the action. Above all, perhaps, the audience this night in Drury Lane took note of the scene before them: 'Lyrick's chamber in Widow Bulfinch's house. Papers scattered about the table, himself writing in a night-gown and cap'. George Farquhar was evidently presenting a transcription of his personal habits and habitat.

On the other hand, in Act IV, Lyrick and Lovewell got back to Roebuck as the one mainly to be identified with Farquhar:

LYR: As the hero in tragedy is either a whining cringing fool that's always a-stabbing himself, or a ranting hectoring bully that's for killing everybody else, so the hero in comedy is always the poet's character.

LOV: What's that?

LYR: A compound of practical rake and speculative gentleman, who always bears off the great fortune in the play, and shames the beau and squire with a whore or chambermaid; and as the catastrophe of all tragedies is death, so the end of comedies is marriage.

Of course Roebuck in the end bore off the fortune of Leanne, while Lovewell married Lucinda. The finish was crude enough, confusing to bewilderment, with scenes of mistaken identity in an arbour, and more of the same in an antechamber of Lucinda's house. It was by the well-worn device employed by Shakespeare in *All's Well* that Leanne, impersonating someone else, got herself mated to Roebuck. But the idea of Farquhar, to the final curtain, was to keep Roebuck a rake, and in that he did succeed.

ADVENTURE INTO COMEDY

The epilogue, both written and spoken by Joe Haynes 'in mourning', bewailed the ills of Drury Lane inflicted by Jeremy Collier and by Italian singers. Between opera by foreigners and drama by natives, London audiences were heavily favouring the musical side. Haynes, thinking he had in a 25-line prologue written enough in commendation of a new author, now in an epilogue just twice that length gave short shrift to young Farquhar, but long lamentation for the house, beginning thus:

I come not here our Poet's fate to see,
He and his play may both be damn'd for me.
No; Royal Theatre, I come to mourn for thee . . .

Joe finished by threatening to hire the playhouse for a girls' boarding school, in which he alone, in a sort of King Solomon way, should be the teacher.

CHAPTER VI

A R R I V A L O F A *Dramatist*

IN the age of the Restoration theatre, there was one and only one word for a play that failed; it was 'damned'. What constituted success? Evidently ten or more performances within a month or two of opening, plus a revival a few months later; the more revivals the more fame, but not money, to the author. He had to be content with the takings at his one or two benefit performances, one if his play had a third night, two if it ran to a sixth. Assuming it true that barely 'five plays indured six days' acting for fifty that were damned in three', we may say that *Love and a Bottle* was no failure. Joe Haynes at the finish had rather doffed aside Farquhar's first effort. But it seemed to be one of the five plays out of the fifty, for it reached its ninth performance. Since epilogues generally were spoken only on the first three nights, this comedy at least survived its epilogue. In fact, it 'far exceeded' its author's expectations.

From his two benefits, George Farquhar collected enough to live on for another year. A good audience, on the authority of Colley Cibber, was worth £150; possibly a full house in Drury Lane brought in as much as £200. Out of the gross receipts the management deducted from £60 to £70 for 'house charges'. Farquhar should at the lowest estimate have earned a total of something like £100; and he needed it.

Love and a Bottle, however expertly acted, proved in the judgment of the critics rather a green apple, with the immaturity of youth upon it, of the boy trying to be grown up by having just sworn his first oath, smoked his first tobacco, drunk his first wine, and run after, or away from, his first harlot. And yet the cynical Tom Brown, upon due

ARRIVAL OF A DRAMATIST

deliberation, said Farquhar 'knew how necessary lewdness was to establish his reputation'. Partisans of Collier, however, made an outcry. Some, while granting to Farquhar a certain grasp of character, a certain knack in phrase and dialogue, reflected that it was no longer than from Easter to Christmas since Collier had excoriated the theatre for its smuttiness, and they put it about that *Love and a Bottle* insulted women. If Bulfinch the lascivious landlady was bad enough, if Lucinda in her virtuous immodesty was still less proper, Roebuck with his flouting and cheapening of the sex at every level appeared to defy Collier even whilst the parson's influence continued to permeate the town, nor did the morality of Lovewell give sufficient counterpoise.

Though this bristling reception, preferable as it was to indifference, angered Farquhar, he was at present carried away by a stronger emotion, an experience which he loved beyond all else: the sight of his own play actually being performed in a theatre. 'I could wish,' as he afterward observed, 'that my whole life long were the first night of a new play'. Or again, it was to him worth haunting Drury Lane just to hear repeated these lines between Mockmode and Lyrick:

'When is a poet at age, pray Sir?'

'At the third night of his first play; for he's never a man till then.'

George Farquhar was there on that night, his benefit night. But not so much the actual benefit was it that absorbed him. In the audience he perceived Catherine Trotter, author of *The Fatal Friendship*, which only a few weeks before had played to success at the 'other house', Lincoln's Inn Fields. Farquhar himself had seen this tragedy, which concerned the unhappy affairs of Lamira, a young widow, and he had applauded it, for he heard in it lines after his own heart, as when Lamira said:

'How pleased we are with importunity,
That makes our own desires seem condescension.'

When thereupon he saw Catherine Trotter evidently enjoying his own first play he was thrilled. She was a frail little woman, small in stature, scarcely his own age, who wore her hair far back from an uncommonly high forehead. Her eyes

were steady and listening, her beautiful nose aquiline, and her cheeks plump. Daughter of a Scottish naval commander and Sarah Bellenden, kin of Lord Bellenden, she not only had written astonishing poetry as a child, but at sixteen, after reading a French novel, she had based upon it a play, *Agnes de Castro*, and even got the play produced in Drury Lane. Two years later, in 1697, Catherine wrote congratulatory verses to Congreve on his *Mourning Bride*. Congreve in return promised her his aid with Betterton, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Indeed Congreve 'went after' the girl Catherine; he grew eager; he visited her daily, under the pretence of looking over her manuscripts. Within a few months' time, Betterton produced *The Fatal Friendship* by this young lady still under twenty, with himself in the leading part. People began to call Mrs. Trotter 'the Scots Sappho'. Half a dozen admirers made lyrics to her in praise of her new play. Two compared her to Sappho, and one to Camilla, while Farquhar called her Daphne and himself Apollo running after her:

Go on then Daphne, Phoebus will pursue,
His chaster fires are all enjoyed by you . . .
Go on, thou champion for thy sex designed,
And prove the Muses are of female kind . . .
Your moving scenes the ravished audience drew,
Raptures we felt, as when your eyes we view;
Such arts were used to mix our hopes and fears,
You made grief pleasing, and we smiled in tears . . .

But Catherine Trotter was now honouring him by attending his third night. How could he acknowledge that? How could he improve his acquaintance? (Mrs. Trotter, celebrated for her beauty, her bright eyes, her delicate complexion, was irreproachable in character.) Within a fortnight's time, on December 27, Farquhar was publishing his *Love and a Bottle*, dedicated, for want of a better name, to the young Marquess of Carmarthen, a man really little known to the author, but somewhat in the public eye as bear-leader to Peter the Great on his recent visit to England. Farquhar decided to send to Mrs. Trotter a presentation copy of his play.

In a letter which he enclosed with it he complained that *Love and a Bottle* had been 'scandalously aspersed for affront-

ing the ladies'. But he protested: 'as an argument of its innocence, I send it to stand its trial before one of the fairest of her sex and the best judge. Besides, Madam, it is an offering due to the favour and honour showed in your appearance on my third night; and a stranger cannot be denied the privilege of showing his gratitude. But humbly to confess the greatest motive, my passions were wrought so high by the representation of the *Fatal Friendship*, and since raised so high by the sight of the beautiful author, that I gladly caught this opportunity.'

Farquhar, in the words of Roebuck, which Mrs. Trotter may have noticed as she watched the play now presented to her in print, was quite confident of his own amorous prowess: 'I have seen some few principles, on which my courtship's founded, which seldom fail. To let a lady rely upon my modesty, but to depend myself altogether upon my impudence; to use a mistress like a deity in public, but like a woman in private; to be as cautious then of asking an impertinent question, as afterwards of telling a story; remembering, that the tongue is the only member that can hurt a lady's honour, though touched in the tenderest part.'

But from Catherine Trotter, sagacious beyond her years, wary beyond her experience, prudent above her times, certainly no plaything even of the eminent Congreve, came no response in particular. 'I find,' she later on observed, 'too general a libertinism among the men'. But she was a woman who 'never interrupted her own ease, nor that of others, with complaints or reproaches'.

Young George Farquhar, it appeared, was allowed as Apollo to admire but not to pursue the elusive Daphne. He still had won little acquaintance in that society to which Mrs. Trotter by virtue of her family connections belonged. In his dedication of *Love and a Bottle* to Lord Carmarthen he had written, 'Being equally a stranger to your Lordship, and the whole nobility of this kingdom . . . I hazard a presumption to declare my respect'. He confessed, rather wistfully, 'an aspiring motion in his inclination'. The struggle of a boy from the bogs to crack the doors of London was hard.

For all that, Farquhar with his animal spirits, gay, young, rakish, flowery, imaginative, yet studious at need, and blest

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

with insight, had in his first play demonstrated that for a juvenile of twenty-one he knew his theatre. Nor did the brief attention wrung from the public for *Love and a Bottle* repress his fancy. Night and day he lived for nothing but the theatre. The whole of London, as he looked upon it, was a comedy. Its populace were characters, its streets and chambers their settings, its capers simply more plays in the making. When he stepped into the Mitre Tavern in St. James's Market, he not only took refreshment; his quick eye sized up the spectacle of tavern life, over which Mrs. Voss, its hostess, efficiently presided.

Of an April day, in the spring following his bow to a Drury Lane audience, Farquhar, as it happened, drifted into the Mitre to dine. But straightway he fixed his attention neither upon food nor upon the other diners; his ear caught a sound of words familiar to him, a sound issuing from the room behind the bar. Someone in that room was reading aloud a play in which Farquhar himself had acted in his Dublin days: it was *The Scornful Lady*, the comedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, wherein he had attempted the part of Loveless. Farquhar, at once aware that the reader was a young woman, 'perceived something so sweet in the voice' that he walked nearer to the door of the back room. Smoothly the voice assumed each character in the play, neatly it let fall the emphasis upon the proper word, and when Farquhar made bold to enter the room itself he was 'all the more struck with the agreeable person and carriage of the performer'. She was a girl of sixteen, of a good height, well-proportioned, and with large eyes full of animation – a girl who at a glance had the makings of a personality. Her audience, of two women, turned out to be Mrs. Voss and Mrs. Oldfield, her aunt and her mother, and the girl's name was 'Nanny' Oldfield. Without hesitation George Farquhar announced that she was cut out for the stage.

Her father, Captain Oldfield, was a spendthrift, who had not only run through his pay in the Guards, but had lost a house round the corner in Pall Mall, which he had inherited. Mrs. Oldfield at first put her child with a sempstress, Mrs. Wotton, in King Street, St. James's, only to find that Nanny there spent most of her time reading plays. Whereupon her

ARRIVAL OF A DRAMATIST

mother thought the girl might be more profitably employed at the Mitre as a barmaid. But Nanny rather shirked the bar, and instead of reading plays to herself at Mrs. Wotton's only begged to read them aloud at Mrs. Voss's.

In this wise it befel Farquhar to discover that the girl was wasting her gifts. He lost no time in apprising Captain Vanbrugh of the news – the natural skill of the young woman as she interpreted the varied and not too easy roles in *The Scornful Lady*, the life which she breathed into the lines which her quick eye picked up, the tone of a scene which she so readily caught according to the intent of the authors. 'This jewel,' exclaimed Farquhar, 'I found by accident in a tavern.' John Vanbrugh, 'a most sweet-natured gentleman, and pleasant', senior to Farquhar by thirteen years, and senior as a dramatist by reason of two smashing successes produced within four months, was not 'too busy' to listen. While his friends were saying he was resting on his laurels, his enemies insinuated that he was sulking over the inky stabs of Jeremy Collier. But the Captain was not yet by any means deserting the theatre. He consented to meet Nanny Oldfield.

Her mother, who had once been a servant to Christopher Rich, and knew her way about, brought the girl to the Captain. What Vanbrugh noticed, as Nanny arrived in Drury Lane, was nothing short of Farquhar's praise: an agreeable figure, arresting eyes, a degree of affability, and in her voice a quality of silver. Her own feelings about the stage at this moment she only revealed subsequently: 'I longed to be at it, and only wanted a little decent entreaties'. Vanbrugh asked her whether she 'more fancied' comedy or tragedy. 'Comedy,' replied Nanny promptly. She explained that she had read *all* of the comedies of Beaumont and Fletcher. Vanbrugh arranged to put the girl on Rich's list at 15s. od. a week.

She left off Nanny, became Anne, and soon got the part of Candiope in Dryden's old play, *Secret Love*. Not all the men of the theatre, it was soon revealed, were so smitten by this ingenue as Farquhar and Vanbrugh were. Colley Cibber thought 'she spoke flat, plain, formal'. On the other hand Susannah Verbruggen, whose word weighed with Vanbrugh

since her hit as Berinthia in *The Relapse*, whose range in humour everyone acknowledged, and whose own voice was 'round, distinct, voluble, and various', found in Anne Oldfield a kindred capacity, and far from being jealous, befriended her. Outside the theatre, the Duke of Bedford took notice of Anne; this counted more with Rich than inside views did, and he raised her salary to a pound a week.

Meanwhile Farquhar, in his recruiting of talent for Drury Lane, did not stop there. One thing he had learnt from the production of *Love and a Bottle*: while his own personality was well worth projecting upon the stage, the development of it required an actor abler, soberer, more alert than Joseph Williams, who had played Roebuck. Farquhar now had in mind an idea for a new comedy, and he wished to write the chief part in it for his benefactor Robert Wilks. Having kept in touch with Smock Alley ever since he had left Dublin, Farquhar knew that Wilks had got on rapidly, had won great applause, for example, in the season of 1698, in all three comedies of Etherege, as Courtall, as Dorimant, as Sir Frederick Frollick, parts which Farquhar in his own writing would be proud to emulate. He went to Rich, to whom he trumpeted the reports from Ireland. Although Rich had not been thinking particularly of Wilks, he had enough confidence in the future of Farquhar to believe that the addition of Wilks to a new Farquhar play would give impetus to the author in the writing of it. Wilks received, and accepted, an offer to come back to London, at £4 a week, an offer which for the second time in his career doubled his old salary.

Consternation arose in Smock Alley. Joseph Ashbury, with no little truth taking the view that he had made Wilks what he was, refused to let the most favoured actor in his company go, and even got an injunction from the Lord-Lieutenant to prevent Wilks from leaving Ireland. But Ashbury reckoned without Wilks's ambition, not to mention the intimacy, which neither time nor distance had diminished, between Wilks and his old pupil Farquhar. The restraint put upon Wilks only wrought the inevitable: he escaped to England secretly.

Arriving in Drury Lane in the autumn of 1699, he without ado was cast for the part of Palamede in Dryden's *Marriage*

ARRIVAL OF A DRAMATIST

à la Mode. Those who had seen him in this theatre three years earlier hardly knew him, so much had he by diligent study improved his capabilities. If Wilks was a slow learner, he was sure, strong, always forward-looking. By way of welcome to London he was 'received with great and general applause'. By way of personal greeting from young Farquhar, Wilks received the gift of an epilogue, a sort of apology for his three-year absence. The happy actor read it to the audience himself, so concluding:

'Void of offence, though not from censure free,
I left a distant isle too kind to me.
Loaded with favours I was forced away,
'Cause I could not accept what I could never pay.
There I could please, but there my fame must end,
For hither none must come to boast, but mend.
Improvement must be great, since here I find
Precepts, examples, and my masters kind.'

No doubt Farquhar simply put into verse the modest thoughts which Wilks himself confided to him. Indeed Wilks had progressed in his art, but rather by Dublin standards than by those of London, and he was astute enough to discern what he still had to achieve. One of the 'examples' that confronted him in London, if not every way an exemplar, was George Powell, the principal actor in Drury Lane. Powell was the greater natural actor, and good though Wilks was as Palamede, Powell had previously got much more humour out of the part. He was seven years older than Wilks, but had not begun to act until later in life, at about thirty. How then did the two men stand in the competition that was imminent? It was distinctly in favour of Wilks, for he was sober and painstaking, while Powell was debauched and negligent. Of this difference nobody was more shrewdly aware than George Farquhar.

To Wilks, very soon after he had returned to town, Farquhar introduced his 'jewel' from the tavern, Anne Oldfield. He had plans for her as well as for his friend, and Anne more than ever 'longed to be at it'. But no judicious actor aged thirty-four is likely to lose his theatrical head over a girl of sixteen, however prepossessing. As reserved as Cibber in his first appraisal, Wilks calmly explained to Anne that training was the better part of speed. In such matters Farquhar did

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

not gainsay the adviser to whom he owed so much, and there for the time being the matter rested.

Since Wilks had come to London 'not to boast, but mend', Farquhar got on with his new comedy in the hope that it might yield the actor such an opportunity of mending. The young dramatist, with a quick eye to topical interest, as in *Love and a Bottle* he had made use of the familiar sight of soldiers returned from the late wars, now noted that the attention of all Europe in this year centred upon Rome, where the jubilee of Pope Innocent XII was to be celebrated with great festivities beginning on Christmas Eve. London was a busy point of departure for travellers bound for 'the Jubilee'. Farquhar accordingly entitled his play *The Constant Couple, or A Trip to the Jubilee*, although any question of laying scenes of it in Rome never entered his head. It was simply to be a play performed about the time of the Jubilee, while the crucial thing was that the protagonist, 'an airy gentleman affecting humorous gaiety and freedom in his behaviour', to be called Sir Harry Wildair, really a semi-subdued Roebuck, was to be written 'on purpose for' Robert Wilks.

Farquhar was maturing into a diarist of drama. His impulse was to write down what he apprehended. His scenes were to be shorthand notes on the daily life which spun round him. Already he saw his characters in a thousand lights, whether in St. James's Park or in the dining-room, in Covent Garden or in Newgate, disputing in the street or coquetting on a balcony, meeting in a bachelor's lodgings or in a lady's chamber. He absorbed the metier of his three most kindred contemporaries: Vanbrugh's vivacity he was equally born with, and so could grasp that; Congreve's grace he aspired to, and with his equivalent education could attempt; Wycherley's talent for climax he envied, and could at least strive to approach. Perhaps above all, hither had come the inspiration in the flesh, Bob Wilks, his friend, his patron, and his hope. Farquhar sat down to his task: deeply mindful of the higher qualities of the three dramatists whom he most admired, he began to write a play round a personality whom he admired no less, Wilks, but still, another play about himself, George Farquhar, for Wildair in this play

ARRIVAL OF A DRAMATIST

was to be 'the character of the author in his politest capacity'.

On the side of the ladies he was inclined as before to shape his female characters out of his own adventures. Even in his letters to women he was dramatic; in declaring his passion, Farquhar wrote as if concocting a love scene in a play. At this very time he was trying to win a young woman – seemingly Catherine Trotter still – who had quite baffled him by her reluctance. 'I had a mind to know, Madam,' he implored her, 'whether you had quarrelled with me t'other night. . . . I find now that you are angry at something. . . . I beg your pardon, and shall henceforth do violence to my own reason and contradict mankind to agree with you. . . . 'Tis a hard fate, that you can't love and be easy, and I can't desist and live; but I can die to make you happy. . . . I cannot bear the spleen, the rheumatism, and your displeasure at once. So, Madam, strike now, and forever quit yourself of an unfortunate man who has but one hand, which he thinks sufficient, since he can thereby ever own himself Yours.'

When after repeated importunity, delivered of a Sunday morning to make it more hallowed, this charmer apparently granted him the pardon besought, Farquhar overleapt himself in anticipation of possessing her: 'What shall I say to the dearest woman upon earth! . . . But the expression, like the enjoyment, in love, is lost by a too ardent desire; my soul plumes itself in the secret pride of being beloved by you. . . . I can no more compliment what I love than I can flatter what I hate . . . hear my wish, and then conclude me happy:

'Oh! could I find (grant heaven that once I may)
A nymph fair, kind, *poetical*, and gay;
Whose love should blaze unsullied and divine,
Lighted at first by the bright lamp of mine . . .
Blest in her arms, I should immortal grow,
Whilst in return I made my Celia so . . .'

I went abroad yesterday morning about seven, and returned about one this morning, slept till past eight, then arose to tell you that I dreamt of you all the time, and that I am your own.'

But in the midst of all his love making and play writing Farquhar would not desert the taverns of Drury Lane; with men, equally as with women, lay a part of his life, of his

dramatic material, of his inspiration. It was his lot, however, as with Captain Dick Steele, that what he wrote his fair one from a tavern did not always achieve the results designed. 'By heavens and earth, my dearest,' he addressed this same lady, 'I am tied neck and heels with wine and company! All the spells of love can't undo the charm; besides, my dear, I am almost fuddled; I shall stay here at the Rose till towards eleven; it will be a tedious walk to go home tonight, considering that you lie upon the same floor with the door: it is not impossible, methinks, for a man of so much love to slip in incognito. Your —— is with me; there will be a double pleasure in deceiving him, and being happy in my dear one's arms; I shall call at the door, and see whether the coast be clear: however, this, if it succeeds, will make me the happiest man upon earth ——; however, my dear, run no hazard that may expose you; but consider, my dear, the eager wishes of the faithfullest, and most loving of mankind.'

That was too much. The wary lady indeed determined to 'run no hazard'. Young Farquhar, it appeared, had quite misunderstood her. She answered his fuddled note by return, and told him that henceforth between them there could be only 'eternal silence'. But the impetuous gallant even then reverted to the charge: 'If I did not love', he supplicated. 'I would not beg, and if ever you loved, you'll grant my pardon. Your letter, Madam, has tormented me more than all the favours of your whole sex can please me. If I have lost you, I have lost myself, and shall be lost to all womankind. My letter last night was written in heat of wine; so men guilty of murder in their drink repent it all their lives. Mine is a greater crime, for I have stabbed myself, pierced my own heart, and now it bleeds with anguish and despair . . . the melting sighs, the moving tears, the joys, the raptures that mounted me to heaven, now cast me down to hell. . . . In short, Madam, I am mad. . . . Revoke that word, eternal silence, or you make me eternally miserable, for I am now the most disconsolate of mankind.'

But he was not too disconsolate to proceed with the writing of *A Trip to the Jubilee*. For all his awareness of Wycherley, Congreve, and Vanbrugh, he now added to Wildair, perhaps at the suggestion of Wilks, a dash from Etherege of

ARRIVAL OF A DRAMATIST

Sir Frederick Frolick, the brave and humorous gallant more flighty than wicked. That is, to make use of both the acting of Wilks and the writing of Farquhar, Wildair should be Roebuck filtered through Etherege. The second male character was Colonel Frank Standard, a bluff honest soldier, neither saint nor blackguard, built up really upon the amorous Captain in *Adventures of Covent Garden*, but in an original way much more developed. Farquhar then put in Richard Vizard, a debauched hypocrite; Smuggler, a lecherous old merchant; and the Clincher brothers, one a newly-made beau in the town and the other a country booby. For comedy, the author added Dicky, a manservant to the country Clincher; and Tom Errand, a porter. The Clinchers he partly drew from Zekiel and Toby in Tom Durfey's *Madame Fickle*, first seen in 1676, but not revived since 1691.

The unifying element in the play, however, was the new part of Lady Lurewell, 'of a jilting temper proceeding from her wrongs from men'. This young woman, now aged twenty-seven, but seduced and deserted at fifteen, had made war upon the male sex ever since. Farquhar actually picked up his character Emilia, from the *Adventures*, and remodelled her as he had fashioned the Captain into Col. Standard. The burden of the plot was comparatively simple: a series of episodes which involved the relations of half a dozen men with Lady Lurewell. Against her, for contrast, stood Angelica, 'a woman of honour' (only slightly suggested by Furetière's Angelica) and her mother Lady Darling. The whole scheme of *A Trip to the Jubilee* seemed to mark a long stride for Farquhar past his rather groping and improbable *Love and a Bottle*.

Cast by Rich and put into rehearsal at Drury Lane, the new play was billed to open on the night of November 28, with a company, permanent as it was, which showed only three new players – but they were important – not found in *Love and a Bottle*. Apart from Wilks as Sir Harry Wildair, Henry Norris, who had also decamped from Dublin, was engaged for Dicky, and Susannah Verbruggen to enact Lady Lurewell. Mrs. Verbruggen, like Norris, was of stage parentage. Though just over thirty, she had been for eighteen years an actress, and she could make up equally well

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

either as an old witch or as a lovely girl, either as a man or as a woman. Both off stage and on Mrs. Verbruggen was a mirthful mimic. No part in a play she was in could go flat, for she heightened all of the characters in it. She was fair, plump, full-featured, with a smooth face, and she showed her greatest charm in her laugh, her twitter, as she flirted with her fan.

Remaining parts were soon distributed amongst those who had appeared in Farquhar's first play. George Powell as Col. Standard was to match his talents against Wilks. Mills, formerly the upright Lovewell, was now Vizard the débauché, while Johnson, originally Lyrick the poet, succeeded to the role of Smuggler the merchant. Those dependable comics Bullock and Pinkey became the Clincher brothers, and Joe Haines filled out the list as Tom Errand the porter. Of the five women in *Love and a Bottle*, Rich retained three: Mrs. Powell, formerly Bulfinch, was now Lady Darling, whose daughter Angelica was to be the late Lucinda, Mrs. Rogers; finally Mrs. Moor, who had been the maid Pindress, inherited the role of Lady Lurewell's maid Parly.

Jane Rogers, a theatrical prude, always liked to play the innocent girl in distress; the character of Angelica suited her. Two years before, in *The Triumphs of Virtue*, so overcome was she in acting the stricken female that she even made a personal vow of chastity. Along came Robert Wilks, alluring, gallant, in his prime. They rehearsed opposite each other as Sir Harry Wildair and Angelica. The wife of Wilks, whether dead or alive, whether in Dublin or in London, did not appear to be anywhere near Drury Lane. Wilks swore he would kill himself – that immemorial dodge of amorous Britons which works so well with gullible women – unless Mrs. Rogers would become his mistress. She did.

When at length *A Trip to the Jubilee* reached its first night, the very first scene of the comedy shocked the audience into attention. Farquhar revealed Wildair, Vizard, and Standard, all three, as lovers of Lady Lurewell. In the second scene he accelerated this pace, with Lurewell confiding to her maid that still more lovers competed:

LURE: Let me survey my captives. The Colonel leads the van. Next, Mr. Vizard. He courts me out of practice

ARRIVAL OF A DRAMATIST

of piety, therefore is a hypocrite. Then Clincher, he adores me with orangery (snuff) and is consequently a fool. Then my old merchant, Alderman Smuggler, he's a compound of both. Out of which medley of lovers, if I don't make a good diversion, what d'ye think, Parly? . . .

PAR: I can't be persuaded, though, Madam, but that you really loved Sir Harry Wildair in Paris.

LURE: Of all the lovers I ever had, he was my greatest plague, for I could never make him uneasy. I left him involved in a duel on my account. I long to know whether the fop is killed or not.

Vizard then concocted a stratagem to distract Wildair from Lurewell. Introduced by Vizard to his cousin Angelica, whom Vizard falsely represented as a bawd, Wildair in Act II tried to converse with the girl (and her mother) on that basis in her own house, but was unsuccessful. Then in the street he met Standard, equally anxious to outrival him with Lurewell.

STAN: But suppose you had lost a mistress.

WILD: Why, then, I would get another.

STAN: But suppose you were discarded by the woman you love; that would surely trouble you.

WILD: You're mistaken, Colonel. My love is neither romantically honourable nor meanly mercenary. 'Tis only a pitch of gratitude. While she loves me I love her. When she desists, the obligation's void.

It was George Farquhar himself speaking. He had feelings of his own no more deeply rooted than that.

But Standard explained that Lurewell had commissioned him to return to Wildair a packet of Wildair's letters. The Colonel was hopeful that this confidential errand proved himself the favourite. Wildair, examining Lurewell's packet, found concealed in it a message: 'I had no better way of letting you know that I lodge in Pall Mall near the Holy Lamb'.

Upon hastening thither, however, Wildair found Smuggler, who, Lurewell privately explained, had accused him in public of dishonesty. Whereat Wildair beat Smuggler with a cudgel. The little plot of Lurewell was actually to embroil

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

both men for the mere feeding of her revenge against the sex. But Wildair ended Act II with verses – much to his own satisfaction – to statesman, soldier, scholar, rake:

Let statesmen plot, and under business groan,
And settling public quiet lose their own;
Let soldiers drudge and fight for pay or fame,
For when they're shot I think 'tis much the same.
Let scholars vex their brains with mood and tense,
And mad with strength of reason fools commence
Losing their wits in searching after sense;
Their summum bonum they must toil to gain,
And seeking pleasure, spend their life in pain.
I make the most of life, no hour misspend,
Pleasure's the means, and pleasure is my end.
No spleen, no trouble shall my life destroy;
Life's not a span, I'll every inch enjoy.

Again, it was Farquhar's own philosophy. He was intensively 'making the most of life'. His very work, his writing, his theatre, was his pleasure, quite as much as his dalliance was.

In the third act, whilst Standard and Vizard dilated upon the fickleness of Lurewell, Wildair, in an uproarious scene, unavailingly offered Angelica fifty guineas for her 'strict modesty'. She asked him plainly whether he loved her. 'Love you?' exclaimed Wildair, echoing Hamlet to Ophelia, 'does fire ascend? Do hypocrites dissemble? Usurers love gold, or great men flattery? Doubt these, then question that I love'. But the young woman was afraid he was mad.

Getting on with his plot, Farquhar again borrowed from his *Adventures of Covent Garden*, from his 'materials of comedy'. As in that piece Peregrine caught the Captain at Emilia's side in her window, but rushing upstairs found the man (having exchanged clothes) to be Lord C's footman, so now Standard detected Clincher and Lurewell coquetting in her balcony, but running in from the street discovered with her only Wildair's footman Tom Errand, in 'a new French livery', Clincher and Errand having exchanged costume, and Clincher having slipped downstairs to wait at the door as the Captain in the *Adventures* did. Standard was mollified, as was Peregrine in the original; Clincher, like the Captain, lost his clothes; and Lurewell, like Emilia, had the laugh of her admirers.



Robert Wilks Esq.

Portrait of Robert Wilks Esq.



ANNE OLDFIELD



SUSANNA CARROLL (Centlivre)

ARRIVAL OF A DRAMATIST

In the next act, IV, Farquhar continued to draw from the *Adventures*. The porter's wife, in that yarn, screamed at the Captain in the alley to give up her husband's clothes, and when the Captain failed to identify himself as an army officer, had him bound over for the Old Bailey. Now, Tom Errand's wife, perceiving Clincher, cried out that he had murdered Tom. A constable appeared, searched Clincher, found a case of pistols, and hauled him off to Newgate. The rest of the act carried on the intrigue between Lurewell and Wildair, then ended with the rivalry of Smuggler and Vizard for Lurewell – Smuggler having appeared in Lurewell's rooms dressed in woman's clothes. The butler discovered two spoons missing. He searched Smuggler, found them on him, and reported the theft to Lurewell, who then had Smuggler bundled away to Newgate like Clincher.

By this time the audience were well keyed up to the question of the fate of the leading characters. Wildair, still in the dark about the virtue of Angelica, offered her in the fifth act 100 guineas. When her mother came in the two women appealed to the letter of introduction which Vizard had sent them on behalf of Wildair. It then became clear that Vizard had only *read* to Wildair the letter before sending it, saying Wildair 'would not scruple 30 or 40 pieces', whereas he had actually written to Lady Darling that he was presenting Wildair for the purpose of courting Angelica. How should Wildair redress her wrongs? The outraged mother left him the choice of either killing Vizard or marrying the girl. In soliloquy Wildair exclaimed, 'If I kill my man, the law hangs me; if I marry my woman, I shall hang myself. But, damn it, cowards dare fight; I'll marry; that's the most daring action of the two.'

To the wedding came, uninvited, like Ate to the nuptials of Peleus and Thetis, Lady Lurewell. She vehemently upbraided Wildair by showing him a ring which he had given her under certain vows; but at this point entered Col. Standard to say he himself had lent Wildair that ring, for the very purpose, only the day before; he had worn it long. Lurewell then recognized Standard as her first lover, whom she had twelve years earlier embraced at her father's house in Oxfordshire, and to whom she had given the ring. When

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Standard explained how he had lost track of Lurewell, by reason of enforced travel and later service in the wars, Lurewell took him back, forgiven.

Although 'a great many quarrelled at the *Trip to the Jubilee* for a misnomer', the play was an instant success. John Hopkins, Farquhar's Irish friend, was of the first-night audience. (He had recently got news of the death of his 'Amasia' in Paris, and as his eye wandered round the theatre he grew greatly agitated when it fell upon a lady who looked much like her.) But with regard to the play, Hopkins thought even Collier himself ought to commend it. Actually Collier had had little influence on Farquhar so far. Restoration flavour still ran strong in his work, not only in the scenes in Lady Darling's supposed bawdy-house, but with some of the lesser characters like Dicky, when talking to his master's brother. For instance, the audience carried away a lively recollection of this short scene:

CLIN: . . . and what can you do, Mr. Dicky?

DICK: Why, sir, I can powder a wig, and pick up a whore.

CLIN: Oh Lord! Oh Lord! a whore! Why, are there many whores in this town?

DICK: Ha, ha, ha, many whores! There's a question indeed. Why, sir, there are above five hundred surgeons in town. Harkee, sir; do you see that woman there in the velvet scarf, and red knots?

CLIN: Ay, sir. What then?

DICK: Why, she shall be at your service in three minutes, as I'm a pimp.

CLIN: O Jupiter Ammon! Why, she's a gentlewoman.

DICK: A gentlewoman! Why, so are all the whores in town, sir.

As the crowd in Drury Lane this night knew, Dicky and Clincher were vitally plausible, specimens to be at any time encountered in the streets of London, just as Vizard was a familiar villain, Standard a forthright Colonel, and Lurewell a believable woman with a past. Yet Farquhar in feeling, if not in speeches in certain scenes, was here beckoning decency to the Restoration stage. Contrary to the formula of writers from Wycherley to Vanbrugh, he was presenting a play with more good in it than evil, and London was ready for this new emphasis.

Frequenters of Drury Lane at successive performances saw 'pit, box, and stage crowded'. Sir Harry Wildair as a character, brave, racy, humorous, more thoughtless than wicked, not straining at wit but the long-awaited natural man, delighted the galleries which had for too many years been stuffed with epigrams. One needed not to 'read in' to this play the veritable character of the author himself; it was there, permeating the whole design, making it live and move, with an action that was brisk, a humour that was spontaneous, and a style that was individual. Bob Wilks made it, this character of Farquhar-Wildair, strike home to the audience as the character of a good fellow, wild seemingly, but sound enough underneath. He read the part 'proportionably extravagant to the writing of the character'. All the more did this etching stand out when seen opposite the superb acting of Susanna Verbruggen as Lady Lurewell, a crafty, revengeful, domineering, unscrupulous, not to say profligate woman, yet brought in the end to an honourable turnabout which Farquhar had cleverly made credible from the start.

It was no use trying to call this bouncing play *The Constant Couple*. London would have it by no other title than *A Trip to the Jubilee*, notwithstanding that its only identity with that festival lay in the senior Clincher, the apprentice turned beau, who was intending to travel to Rome. So, in fact, were hundreds of Londoners at the very moment, and they all seemed to think they had better find what Farquhar's play was about before departing.

A much older minor dramatist, John Corye, a man nearly as old as Wycherley, having produced one play as far back as 1671, was unlucky enough in this present month of December 1699 to try another, *A Cure for Jealousie*, at the rival theatre of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Corye was 'a little man with a whistle of a voice, who abandoned the law for the stage, and was as weak an actor as he was an author'. When the audience 'saw no fun' in his comedy, Corye was furious, whereat the audience took great delight in his anger. He at once attributed his failure to the 'absurd admiration of the public for Farquhar'. As a lawyer, Corye should have been cautious enough not to say so in print. But he went so far

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

as to write contemptuously of 'poor George's Jubilee farce'. Quite unable to apply to himself the title of his own play, *A Cure for Jealousie*, Corye bitterly discovered that the only result of his outburst was to send the people in still larger crowds to Drury Lane, while young George Farquhar, at the age of twenty-two the admired of all admirers, had fulfilled the sequence of his destiny: scholar, actor, dramatist.

CHAPTER VII

GIDDY HEART

POINTED out, sought after, entertained, the author of *A Trip to the Jubilee* was seldom able in his frequenting of Drury Lane to call his time his own. Yet he could not keep away from the theatre; success was sweet. Of a Saturday night, not long after the opening of his play, Farquhar encountered a lady in a mask who asked where she might see him as soon as the performance ended.

'At the Rose, Madam.' He noticed that she had a pretty hand.

No sooner had he got there, with three men friends, and begun to sup upon a brace of roast fowl, than this lady, with another, sent in from a coach for him. Farquhar emerged and exchanged compliments, making his own 'pretty plain'. The ladies, for reasons best known to themselves not caring for the Rose, asked him to come along to the Fountain Tavern in the Strand. He agreed to go.

Sizing them up behind masks as well as he could, Farquhar, as they drove on to the Fountain, was unable to see in this pair anything 'beyond Covent Garden'. A distinction was necessary, because it determined that he order for them not Burgundy, but 'new French'. Yet it seemed to him, as he took measurements, that both were 'in love' with him, as might be said, and one of the ladies 'a little further gone' than the other. Modest in their discourse, the masked ones proceeded at the Fountain to drink rather like women of quality than like Covent Garden, and the bottle was soon out. Farquhar was thereupon anxious to return to his fowls at the Rose; he did not like covered dishes.

At this point the more flirtatious of the ladies promised to take off her mask if he would first see her home. To this Farquhar, nothing if not direct, agreed provided she would

let him 'lie with her all night'. She grew angry. But the proposition, he could see, she did not so much object to as his manner of phrasing it; young Farquhar, slightly forgetful, had still been thinking of Covent Garden ladies. However they soon all drove off, set down the second lady at her separate address, resumed the journey as a couple, and at length alighted in Golden Square. The fair one advised her gallant to make the coach wait. He interpreted that as a hint to discharge it.

Upstairs, as the lady indeed removed her mask but so pulled a hood about her that her guest could no more see her face than before, Farquhar observed that his admirer's rooms were 'very stately'. They fitfully talked chit-chat. A maid with a warming-pan passed through, and on reappearing said, 'Your ladyship's bed is ready'. The maid dropped a modest curtsy, and withdrew.

'It is time,' said the lady to Farquhar, 'for you to go to bed.'

He could have taken that to be a hint as modest as the maid's curtsy, but did not. 'Madam,' he rejoined, 'with all the speed I'm able.' And he began to unbutton.

But for all his haste, she was abed before him. Their conversation was 'free, natural, and pleasant', until 10 the next morning, and still the room remained so dark that Farquhar never saw the lady's face. 'I know every other part about her so well,' he soliloquized upon leaving Golden Square, 'that I shall never forget her.'

Over the week-end, unable to think of anything else, he must write to this amiable hostess. He would give her two seats in the pit, for herself and the other lady, her friend, to see his new play again on the day following. 'I can no more forbear whispering my past joys to myself than I could abstain repeating them with you would you bless me with a second opportunity. I have sent you a note for the pit, to see the *Jubilee* tomorrow, though I would rather try the power of my love by finding you out in the front boxes. I'm sure you can't be handsome, for nature never made anything entirely perfect. In short, if I can't find you out by instinct, never trust me when I say I love, which must be as great a curse as your favour will prove a blessing.'

GIDDY HEART

Perhaps she did not like to be told she could not be handsome; perhaps, like many a lady of her day and inclination, she had wanted – with the celebrity of the hour – only the adventure of a single night. In any case Farquhar, sufficiently immersed in the publication of *A Trip to the Jubilee* as a quarto, seems not to have got on further with the charmer of Golden Square. The booklet appeared on December 9.

The author this time wrote his dedication to a man several notches lower in the scale of nobility, to Sir Roger Mostyn, a Flintshire baronet and rising young Tory politician, aged only twenty-four. (He later fell passionately but fruitlessly in love with Anne Oldfield.) To him Farquhar attributed ‘the fire of youth, the sedateness of a senator, the modern gaiety of a fine English gentleman, and the noble solidity of the ancient Briton’. What was more arresting than these peonies of prettiness was the author’s confidence in himself. ‘I cannot call this an ill play,’ he said, ‘since the town has allowed it such success’. On the other hand he saw reasons for this success outside the play. ‘I have not been long enough in town to raise enemies against me; and the English are still kind to strangers. I am below the envy of great wits, and above the malice of little ones. I have not displeased the ladies, nor offended the clergy, both which are now pleased to say that a comedy may be diverting without smut and profaneness’. It was a story far different from the aftermath of *Love and a Bottle*.

Nor did Farquhar forget his old friend, patron, and sponsor who had headed the cast: ‘Mr. Wilks’s performance has set him so far above competition in the part of Wildair that none can pretend to envy the praise due to his merit. That he made the part will appear from hence, that whenever the stage has the misfortune to lose him, Sir Harry Wildair may go to the Jubilee.’ This was wormwood to George Powell, as leader of the players in Drury Lane; but Powell in creating the character of Col. Standard, welcome as that figure was to the reform element, had enjoyed no opportunity comparable to that which had befallen Wilks. Not even second honours came to Powell. The other reputation confirmed in *A Trip to the Jubilee* was that of Henry Norris as Dicky. So remarkable was the hit made by this

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

little man with his thin voice that all London took to calling him 'Jubilee Dicky', a name which, as soon as he appeared in subsequent plays, was printed in the play bills instead of his own. Since both Norris and Wilks had been fellow-actors with Farquhar in Smock Alley, the author had more than immediate reason for noting with gratification in his preface the sure aim which his pen had taken.

Continuously, *A Trip to the Jubilee* caught the support of the town. Over the entire year of 1699, if one looked back to its beginning, George Farquhar was the only dramatist to win distinction at Drury Lane. Plays furthermore which followed the *Jubilee* were doomed; they could not compete; audiences flocked to Farquhar again and again. Not only Corye, but Abel Boyer, John Dennis, John Oldmixon, all failed at one theatre or the other, though Oldmixon, whose play *The Grove*, with music by Purcell, appeared in February 1700, tried to court popularity by obtaining an epilogue by Farquhar. The unbounded preference for the *Jubilee* proved no little damaging to Thomas Betterton and his company in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Captain Vanbrugh, in a letter to the Earl of Manchester, lamented the sorry state of the box office in that house. To pull them out of their difficulties they had expected a new play by Congreve; it was not until March that he furnished them with *The Way of the World*.

One must hesitate to say that the upstart Farquhar toppled over the mighty Congreve. But the lines of Congreve proved too coruscating for his audience; if not blinded by his wit, they seemed deaf to it; the play was 'too keen a satire to win applause', and the author's talented mistress Anne Bracegirdle, in the leading part of Millamant, failed to capture the sympathy of the playgoers. Congreve in a rage appeared before the curtain and declared that he would write no more, that his quiet, his abilities, his fame, were no longer to be risked upon people so unworthy. And gloom still overshadowed Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Yet the London season did offer other allurements. Within a fortnight, over at Drury Lane on March 25, the scene opened upon a new version of *The Pilgrim*, by Fletcher, reshaped from verse into prose by John Vanbrugh. Old Dryden had done a fresh prologue and epilogue, together

with a few textual tinkering, for which he was to receive the cash benefit of the third performance.

In neither *The Pilgrim* nor *The Way of the World* did the personal interest of young Farquhar lie in Vanbrugh, in Congreve. While of the two productions he watched more closely *The Pilgrim*, its attraction radiated from its two leading players, Bob Wilks as Pedro and Anne Oldfield as Alinda. Vanbrugh was still pinning his faith to the girl Anne, this young woman not yet eighteen, Farquhar's stage foundling, while Wilks was now amenable to giving her a chance in his support.

But the notice which Farquhar took of Anne, apart from the possibility that she might develop into an actress whom he could write for, was the attention paid by a town beau to any magnetic and youthful lady. He was however not looking at Anne alone. At this moment of high success, with *A Trip to the Jubilee* lengthening its string of performances, and the author collecting the unheard-of reward of a third benefit, Farquhar sought safety in the extension of his flirtations rather than in the solitary chase. Among others he fancied a certain Mrs. C—— (possibly that same Mrs. Catherine Trotter), a woman of talent. It was her conversational powers that beguiled him. Writing her from the taverns, he found it a short jump from admiration of her mind to desire of her body.

'I am got to the Rose,' he addressed Mrs. C—— one chilly evening, 'whence I send to know how my dear is. Bless me with a line, my dear. If I durst, I would visit you.

'Tis a cold frosty night,
My desires are warm:
My love makes a fire,
To keep me from harm.
But should you prove cruel,
And your favours withhold,
My fire goes out
For want of its fuel,
And I, poor I, must perish from cold.

'So much for rhyme. Now for reason: I love you, my dear, and I have a thousand reasons for it. . . . You have art enough to engage my friendship, and beauty enough to engage my

love. You shall make a friend of me, and I'll aspire to make a mistress of you. But if you bless me with knowledge of time and place of waiting on you, you shall make a friend, lover, fool, or what you please of, Madam, your Admirer.'

But Mrs. C—— was a woman who thought things over. She was very acceptable, like a salonière, in a circle of men of parts, and she knew it well. Why should she bow in a hurry to the impetuous one? She drove him to the taverns, if not to drink. When Farquhar failed to get on with a woman, he reverted for solace to the world of men; company he must have, day or night. From another tavern, surrounded in it by poets and beaux, he nevertheless besought Mrs. C—— once more: 'You were so engaged with wits last night, Madam, that an honest man could not be happy; and I'm so engaged with wits now, that I can't write sense. I am very uneasy, and I don't know for what. I can drink no health that can restore my cure. I am stupid and lifeless; for my love is where? God damme, Madam, I wish I had never seen you. . . .'

Yet he could hardly wait to see her again. He went back to her; he passed the afternoon with her; by the very rush of his talk he swept her into a sort of acknowledgement that they loved; and then he went away.

On the next morning, he must write her the history of his absence: 'When I left you, my dear, I went to the play; from thence to wit and wine, which detained me till four this morning. Then I went to bed, and dreamt of her whose health I came from drinking. . . . Love and Fortune cannot be reconciled. They are both blind, and therefore can never meet; but you and I can see, for we love one another. . . .'

Still Mrs. C——, the coquette, continued to put off her ardent wooer. What was it all about? 'Tis a hard case,' the wretched Farquhar begged in one message more, 'that you should disturb a man of his natural rest at this rate. If I have slept one wink tonight, may I sleep to all eternity. The very thoughts of you made me wakeful, as if I had had your dear self in my arms. Zounds, Madam, what d'ye mean? Consider, I'm a man; a mortal, wishing, amorous man.'

Young Farquhar was not the sort to keep on knocking fruitlessly at the door of any woman; nor, even if he had in this case gained entrance, was he yet the sort to frequent her

door only. At this very moment he was philandering with Mrs. Susanna Carroll, a verse-writer, a follower of the wits, a woman ten years his senior and twice a widow – her first husband having died and her second having fallen in a duel. In some ways, Farquhar and Mrs. Carroll were birds of a feather: she was born in Ireland, she was an orphan at twelve, and she had come to London to seek her fortune. ‘Fat and merry,’ Susanna Carroll described herself. That suited George Farquhar, who pursued the lady in his usual style, and when he did not hear from her, he must at once find out the reason why: ‘Neither grief nor love,’ he assured her, ‘will break the heart of any man, since neither of them have killed me, though I have been forced to be two days without the honour of seeing you . . . you promised me a letter. . . . But when I came to town this morning and found none, if ever you saw or could fancy a man wild with despair, just such a thing was I.’ Merely because he had been off in the country for a bit, was he forgotten, deservedly slighted, disparaged by someone, ruined in her esteem? His hand so trembled that he could write no more.

But Susanna, who was an observant woman, noticed upon the seal of this letter the print of a *thimble*. ‘Your trembling,’ she retorted, ‘was caused by some female sprite . . . ’tis a malady you voluntarily draw upon yourself . . . don’t affect it too frequently, lest the angry God should make you feel his power in reality.’ She explained that whilst he was expecting a letter yesterday from her, she was awaiting a visit from him. ‘I was as much out of humour at my disappointment as if I had been really in love with you.’ Indeed everybody but herself thought her that way inclining. ‘If the devil be but so much my friend,’ she protested, ‘to keep you out of my sight for four and twenty hours, I am certain I shall be out of danger’. Nevertheless she sent him a copy of verses.

By way of rejoinder Farquhar sent back about forty lines of his own, beginning:

‘Madam, by making such a pother,
Of being tost this way and t’other,
Methinks ’tis plain you want a rudder:
Which, if my counsel might prevail,
You’d get, and fasten to your tail

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

The next time you resolve to sail,
Then you'd not fear a storm or quicksand,
When once your Ladyship is mann'd. . . .'

He apologized for his delay by explaining that 'his hackney was at grass'. But from her he desired neither poetry nor praise, merely leave to visit her. 'Oblige me,' he adjured her, as the Queen might have said to Polonius, 'with more truth and less wit'.

Susanna Carroll had thought their acquaintance ended, but that she saw a porter approach her door, give three resounding knocks, and deliver this letter with its verses. The drift of them she did not relish. 'I am not,' she rebuked George, 'so ill a mathematician (tho' a woman), but I know how to steer my course, and where to cast anchor, too. I guess our acquaintance will be but of a short longitude, if your Pegasus takes such a latitude in his style. I am sorry you misunderstand my intent, which was only to divert you over a bottle, and myself from the spleen. I never had the least design of coming to any particulars. . . . I must see your answer ere I know whether I shall give you leave to visit me or not.'

He thought her objections ill taken, because she was attaching more serious import to verses than she would have done to prose, and it was Susanna herself, by writing verse to him in the first instance, who had invited reply in kind. "'Tis strange to me,' he answered, 'that you who have so good a relish should let yourself fall into a mistake, and not discern that whatsoever ill face my poetry might carry with it, it was innocent at bottom. . . . Keep me to prose . . . when I am forced to make room for a Muse in my breast, I am possessed. . . . I dream of you all night, and in spite of your rigour, had I you in my arms, it is impossible to describe the ecstasy. . . .'

The riposte to this lyrical advance proved even a further check. What an exasperating woman, this Mrs. Carroll! 'If your dreams be so pleasant,' she plagued him, 'enjoy them still; they are the only certain pleasures . . . a thousand things may occur to make us unhappy should we indulge the folly of love'. Her double widowhood, her seniority by ten years, these were the cruelties of experience, with which she seemed

to twit him. Yet she would try to help him put aside his ardour. 'Think that I have a thousand unanswerable faults. . . . as for example . . . think me (for aught you know, I may be) a mistress easy to be enjoyed, one that may be bought with sordid gold, when the most nice rhetoric fails to move. . . . then ask yourself if you still love. . . .' She would neither deceive him, nor dishonourably use him, if he pleased to continue writing; but, she said, she never must see him more.

This was beyond sufferance for Farquhar. If it was his eyes that she objected to, he would pluck 'em out. What did he care about any defects in *her*? 'Be common, be rotten, false, designing, be nothing but what is base and infamous; I will not stop in my pursuit; but be content to share infection with you, might I but taste those ravishing enjoyments which you, and none but you, can give, and have my portion of those charming things which your mind produces. Good gods! What have I been saying of a woman that comes nearest to perfection of any of her sex, and contains more virtues in her than a whole convent does? . . . your very anger has a beauty in't . . . like a gentle wind, it more increases than abates my fires. . . . I beseech you, Madam, suffer me to visit you. You know you can command my strongest passions with a look. . . .' But she evidently could not command those passions to subside.

What Mrs. Carroll did do, of an April day, was to make off to the seaside (north-east from London) by way of escape. She left behind with Abel Boyer her first play, which she called *The Perjured Husband*. Boyer was a Frenchman, of her own age, from Languedoc, had come to England after the Revocation, and was tutor to Princess Anne's young son the Duke of Gloucester. His only qualification as a judge of drama was his authorship of that play which had just failed, his adaptation of Racine's *Iphigenia*. Yet he did boast some theatrical acquaintance, and he persuaded Betterton to read Mrs. Carroll's manuscript. When Betterton thought the catastrophe too abrupt, Boyer was not put off; he would try the rival playhouse. 'I design,' he wrote Susanna on May 2, 'to desire Mr. Farquhar to peruse it, for I have reasons to think both he and Mr. Wilks will stand your friends in this affair.' Speaking of Farquhar, Boyer went on to say, 'Mr.

Farquhar has not published the book he intended; neither do I think he will ever any on that subject'. This was apparently the correspondence between Emilia and Lord C., of which the letters from that twisting lady had at her request been written by Farquhar himself. It was these letters, together with those from the Lord, which Farquhar six months earlier had at the end of his *Adventures of Covent Garden* threatened to publish.

However, Boyer did inform Susanna Carroll that another book of letters had indeed appeared. 'Briscoe's book is out, and your letters in it, with answers to the same, both which are no small ornament to the collection'. The 'answers' were mainly the answers to her from George Farquhar, these very letters which he had amorously written to her in the months just past. The volume was entitled *Familiar and Courtly Letters, written by Monsieur Voiture, 1700*. The contents contributed (that is, divulged) by Farquhar were headed 'Love Letters' — which included his effusions addressed evidently to Catherine Trotter — and 'A Pacquet from Wills', embracing 'A Saturday Night's Adventure', the letters to Mrs. C——, and the exchanges with Susanna. Farquhar signed 'Celadon' to his letters to Mrs. Carroll, while she used the name 'Astrea'. Susanna Carroll may have thought she in some way resembled the goddess of justice; but why Farquhar should have chosen the name Celadon, companion to Phineus, the blind king of Thrace, was not so clear. Pseudonyms apart, it is plain that epistolary writers of neither sex suffered in this day from any inhibitions of privacy.

Sam Briscoe, the publisher of these letters, kept a bookshop in Covent Garden. His relations with Farquhar had gone beyond the mere give-and-take of business, for Briscoe had sought to befriend the young dramatist, as on a larger scale Jacob Tonson, being secretary to the Kit-Cat (of which Farquhar unhappily was not a member), was putting himself on a quasi-social basis with nearly all the major authors in town. Within a day or two after Abel Boyer had written to Mrs. Carroll at her East Anglian refuge, Farquhar struck off to Briscoe forty-odd lines of consolatory verse, since the hapless publisher had incurred with a young woman mis-

GIDDY HEART

adventure rather more vexing than Farquhar's. This poesy, which Farquhar called a burlesque letter, he composed (May 4) at his new address in the Inner Temple, and headed it, 'To a gentleman that had his pocket pickt of a watch and some gold by a mistress'. It contained these among other couplets:

'I'm sorry, Sam, thour't such a ninny
To let a wench rob thee of guinea . . .
You're fairly fobbed, to let her get all,
Both one, and also t'other metal . . .
She wound you up to her own liking,
Then stole the watch, while you were striking . . .
If that be so, my dearest Sammy,
You'll curse, and bid the devil damn ye . . .
May the 4th, from Temple Inner,
The post's going out, I in to dinner.'

The end of poor Briscoe's ill luck was not yet. The worst of it was that shortly afterward, even though he made a fair sale of *Familiar and Courtly Letters*, he went bankrupt, owing in part to a combination against him of disgruntled authors, of whom Farquhar was not one. Farquhar it was who continued to stand by his friend, encouraged him, and predicted for him an eventual return to stability.

Whilst writing about Briscoe and Farquhar to Mrs. Carroll, Abel Boyer also mentioned the death of the prince of contemporary poets, who at the age of sixty-nine yielded up the ghost on May 1: 'Dryden, the Great Dryden, is dead - Will's Coffee-house and the Muses despair of ever finding him a successor among the men poets; but as the Salic Law has no more force in Parnassus than in England, I dare prophesy the bays will fall to your share'. This was tall flattery for one whose verses stood yet unacclaimed, and whose first play was yet to be acted. Boyer, in truth, was only pursuing Susanna, eagerly, like Farquhar himself.

But the lady was under no illusions of literary grandeur. 'How dare you,' she demanded, 'compliment me at so prodigal a rate!' If before Dryden was cold in his coffin the talk of a successor must be bruited about, she was ready to nominate none other than Boyer's rival for her favours, George Farquhar, for whose talents, whatever she thought of his attentions, she felt nothing but admiration. 'If he who

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

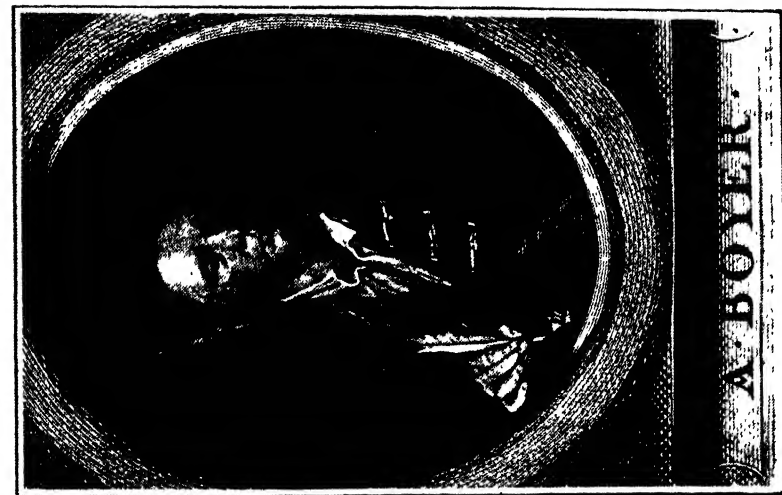
pleases best merits most,' Susanna went on to Boyer, 'I am bold to say the bays will fall to the Hibernian bard: and were his vanity as great as his success, he would demand the trophies of his conquest, nor fear the malice of his snarling critical brethren, nor the ill-nature of the town, who just even in the grin of laughter shall condemn the play. This, by the by, I think a very great defect in their judgment: either in damning the thing that pleases 'em, or paying for what they don't like.' (*A Trip to the Jubilee* was still attracting full audiences to Drury Lane.) 'I think the main design of comedy is to make us laugh: now if the poet can be so happy as to divert our spleen, 'tis but just he should be commended for it. This consideration has carried me so far as to make me write the copy of verses which you'll find here enclos'd.'

Her poetry was addressed 'To Mr. Farquhar upon his Comedy called *A Trip to the Jubilee*'. In about forty lines of panegyric she described the poet as the graceful, the youngest, and the best-beloved son of Thalia. So ended the copy:

'The Constant Couple does our fame redeem,
And shows our sex can love, when yours esteem.
And Wildair's character does plainly show,
A man of sense may dress and be a Beau.
In Vizard many may their picture find;
A pious outside, but a poisonous mind.
Religious hypocrites thou'st open laid,
Those holy cheats by which our isle is sway'd.
Oh, mayst thou live! and Dryden's place supply,
So long till thy best friends shall bid thee die;
Could I from bounteous heaven one wish obtain,
I'd make thy person lasting as thy fame.'

This was all very well, even if it was intended to reach Farquhar only by way of Abel Boyer, or indeed, to remind Boyer that compared to George Farquhar he himself had no chance of capturing the suspended love of the lady.

But Farquhar, the somewhat celebrated author of London's reigning success, was meanwhile wasting no time on his own. He had found still another fair one. She was a friend of Susanna the actress, that laughter-loving Susanna Ver-



Wm. Thos. Bullock Comedian.





J. John Hambrough.

col. J. B. Jay. Mr. May. Mrs. Barrett. Mrs. Jones.

James Hunt.

John by J. G. G. on the Grand.

bruggen, who was still gathering applause at Drury Lane in the part of Lady Lurewell. The new deity he called Penelope. (An old Army officer who knew Farquhar well later said she was Anne Oldfield.) Already they were exchanging letters full of throbs. 'If you find no more rest,' Farquhar wrote her at 11 o'clock on a Friday night from a tavern, 'from your thoughts in bed than I do, I could wish you, Madam, to be always there, for there I am most in love. I went to the play (he was always at the play) this evening, and the music raised my soul to such a pitch of passion that I was almost mad with melancholy. I flew thence to Spring-Garden, where with envious eyes I saw every man pick up his mate, whilst I alone walked like solitary Adam before the creation of Eve . . . nothing I found entertaining but the nightingale, which methought in sweet notes like your own pronounced the name of my dear Penelope. . . . From hence I retired to the tavern, where methought the shining glass represented your fair person, and the sparkling wine within it looked like your lively wit and spirit. I met my dear mistress in everything, and I propose presently to see her in a lively dream, since the last thing I do is to kiss her dear letter, clasp her charming idea in my arms, and so fall fast asleep.'

This tangible idea of his, this Penelope, was not always accessible. If Mrs. Verbruggen was staying with her, Farquhar was denied admittance; he could then solace himself only by taking a sympathetic friend into his own lodgings. At such a moment he had to tell Penelope how he envied not only her sprightly guest the actress, but the long-eared lap dog Adonis which Penelope fancied. 'Well! Mrs. Verbruggen and my charming Penelope are to lie together tonight. What would I give now to be a mouse (God bless us!) behind the hangings, to hear the chat! You don't know, Madam, but my genius which always attends you may overhear your discourse; therefore not one word of George. I'm resolved to have a friend to lie with me tonight, that I may quit scores with you; and it shall go hard but I prove as kind to my companion as you are to yours, though I must confess that I had rather be in Mrs. Verbruggen's place, with all the little pillows about me, or in that of Monsieur Adonis upon the chair.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

'My rival is a dog of parts,
That captivates the ladies' hearts;
And yet by Jove (I scorn to forge)
Adonis' self must yield to George.
I am a dog as well as he,
Can fawn upon a lady's knee;
My ears are long, and I can bark,
To guard my mistress in the dark:
I han't four legs, that's no hard sentence,
For I can paw, and scrape acquaintance. . . .
And if Adonis does outrival me,
Then I'm a greater Son of a Bitch than he . . .'

Farquhar had indeed guarded Penelope in the dark, only the night before, when as they were walking round Rosamond's pond, that perennial rendezvous of lovers in St. James's Park, she took fright at a water-rat near the brim. Her wooer defended her as if the rat had been a lion.

But Penelope was not yet the complete beloved of George Farquhar. Of a sudden she fell ill, or at least indisposed, and she put him off that way. Again, on a certain evening, he was with her, but had to go away upon another matter. He could find no conveyance: he roamed from her lodgings across Hyde Park. His letter to her in the morning was both a diary of his thoughts and a record of his midnight rambles:

'Why should I write to my dearest Penelope when I only trouble her with reading what she won't believe? I have told my passion, my eyes have spoke it, my tongue pronounced it, and my pen declared it. I have sighed it, swore it, and subscribed it. Now my heart is full of you, my head raves of you, and my hand writes to you; but all in vain. If you think me a dissembler, use me generously like a villain, and discard me forever. But if you will be so just to my passion as to believe it sincere, tell me so, and make me happy. . . . Your indisposition last night when I left you put me into such disorder that not finding a coach I missed my way . . . till I found myself close to Tyburn. . . . Instead of laughing at myself, I fell to pitying poor Mr. Farquhar, who whilst he roved abroad amongst your whole sex, was never out of his way, and now by a single She was led to the gallows.

'From the thoughts of hanging, I naturally entered upon those of matrimony. I considered how many gentlemen have taken a handsome swing to avoid some inward disquiets.

Then why should I not hazard the noose to ease me of my torment? Then I considered whether I should send for the ordinary of Newgate, or the parson of St. Anne's (Soho) I was the most inclinable to the parish priest; besides, if I died in a fair lady's arms, I . . . should have the most beautiful tomb in the universe . . . these thoughts of mortality were very melancholy; but who could avoid thoughts of death when you were sick? And if your health be not dearer to me than my own, may the next news I hear be your death, which would be as great a hell as your life and welfare is a heaven to the most amorous of his sex.'

After this tribute Penelope seemed no longer able to resist her adorer. He passed an uninterrupted and eloquent Sunday with her. Upon leaving her at the end of this more assuaging visit Farquhar made his way to a tavern in the Strand, as if to celebrate. He commemorated the evening only too well; on the Monday it was George who had to be mindful of his own health, not Penelope of hers. But his attachment was no longer that of a suppliant; the letter rang with the accents of a lover:

'I can no more let a day pass without seeing or writing to my dear Penelope than I can slip a minute without thinking of her. I know nobody can lay a juster claim to the account of my hours than she, who has so indisputable a title to my service, and I can no more keep the discovery of my faults from you than from my own conscience, because you compose so great a part of my devotion. Let me therefore confess to my dearest angel how last night I sauntered to the Fountain, where some friends waited for me. One of 'em was a parson, who preaches over anything but his glass. Had not his company and Sunday night sanctified the debauch, I should be very fit for repentance this morning. The searching wine has sprung the rheumatism in my right hand, my head akes, my stomach pukes; I dreamed all this morning of fire, and waken in a flame. To compleat my misery I must let you know all this, and make you angry with me. I design, though, this afternoon to repair to St. Ann's prayers, to beg absolution of my Creator and my Mistress; if both prove merciful, I'll put on the resolution of amending my life, to fit me for the joys and heaven and you.'

There was, it seemed, rather a dearth of mercy. Farquhar emerged from one bibulous illness only to sink into another. He would have it that all was owing to his absence from Penelope, that only she could assure him that health which kept eluding him. He ventured out to the theatre. Penelope was there, too; but after the play, she drove off in a coach full of friends, and he made no attempt to follow on; he 'forsook' her. Men of his eager acquaintance then hustled him off to drink cider in a cellar, 'a dark, chilly, confounded hole, fit only for treason and tobacco'. Warm from the throng of the theatre, he unwisely threw off his full-bottom perruque. Before he knew what struck him he was in the clutch of an ague, bred of the rawness of the cellar and the coldness of his tippie, and he was taken with alarming pain in his jaws. 'Pity my condition, fair charmer,' he wrote Penelope from the very tavern, 'I have got a cold without and a fire within; love and cider do not agree; so I'll have no more cellars. If you don't send me some comfort in my afflictions, expect to have a note to this purpose. . . . Be pleased to accompany the corpse of an unfortunate lover, who died of an aking chops and a broken heart.'

By way of encouragement, Penelope sent her literary worshipper some verses of her own, and asked for his comments. Farquhar found in these lines of hers two difficulties, the old one of poor handwriting, and a new one of obscurity in her sense when conveyed in verse. But he put these criticisms delicately. Better it was, he thought, to tutor the young lady indirectly by writing for her a few apt measures of his own, of which the following, in the middle of the effusion, contained at least as much frankness as poetry:

'O, could I find (grant heaven that once I may)
A nymph fair, kind, poetical, and gay,
Whose love should blaze unsullied and divine,
Lighted at first by the bright lamp of mine. . . .'

When he had used these verses a year earlier – was it not to Catherine Trotter? – they had rather failed to impress. But now? He went on, with new ones:

'Free as a mistress, faithful as a wife,
And one that loved a fiddle as her life,
Free from all sordid ends, from interest free,

GIDDY HEART

For my own sake affecting only me,
What a blest union should our souls combine!
I hers alone, and she be only mine. . . .’

‘You see, Madam,’ he concluded, ‘that my rhyme has argued me out of love’. But he was still as much her captive as ever, for he entreated her to meet him in the Park on the morrow at six. ‘If you tarry till seven, you may find me at the end of the Lover’s Walk, hanging upon one of the trees, which will be the readiest way . . . to bring our amour to a conclusion. I am an impudent fellow; that’s to prevent your reflection upon my presuming to appoint you a place of assignation.’

However this swift affair with Penelope, begun and consummated within so few days, did not prevent Farquhar from attending on May 13 in Westminster Abbey the burial service for John Dryden. The young dramatist was surprised that instead of the Psalms of David an Ode of Horace was sung. Although it was the famous and most fitting final ode of Book III, ‘Exegi monumentum aere perennius’, Farquhar made this comment, ‘We don’t think a poet worth Christian burial’. But the niceties of religion were not Farquhar’s strong point. It did not occur to him that a pagan ode rather than a Biblical psalm figured in the service because Dryden died a Catholic.

While Farquhar was impressed with the pomp of the ceremony, he found it a kind of rhapsody, fitter for the lamented Samuel Butler, of *Hudibras*, than for Dryden, because the cavalcade struck him as mostly burlesque. There were fifty carriages filled with Dryden’s friends, and these fifty were followed by fifty more. ‘An extraordinary man,’ Farquhar observed, ‘and buried after an extraordinary fashion, for I do believe there was never such another burial seen’. Farquhar’s friend Dr. Samuel Garth, one of his ‘ingenious acquaintance at Will’s Coffee-house’, called the best-natured man amongst the wits, delivered the funeral oration, in Latin. To the attentive young Farquhar, this eulogy was ‘great and ingenious, worthy the subject, and like the author, whose prescriptions can restore the living, and his pen embalm the dead’. Dryden was laid beside congenial spirits, the greater Chaucer and the lesser Cowley,

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

but with both of whom he possessed undoubted gifts in common.

If the onlooking George Farquhar, perhaps recalling that it was a play of Dryden's that caused a certain young man in Smock Alley four years earlier to abandon acting as a career, took in these services with something less than reverence, he only remained true to his ruling disposition: 'So much for Mr. Dryden, whose burial was the same with his life; variety, and not of a piece. The quality and the mob, farce and heroics; the sublime and ridicule mixed in a piece, great Cleopatra in a hackney coach.' To all of which, the really appreciative and sensitive Farquhar was himself not unrelated. The ceremony induced within him at least a speculative meditation. 'For my part,' he concluded in a letter about it to his lady-love, 'if I am not more a poet a hundred years hence than I am now, I'll be damned. And I can assure you that Mr. Dryden had never died had he not grown too old to please the ladies; and if that be my case already, the Lord have mercy on me.'

CHAPTER VIII

A M I D S U M M E R

Escape

FARQUHAR for his part was pleasing the ladies well enough, only too many of them. He even gave up trying to keep them apart. There were Catherine Trotter, Susanna Carroll, Anne Oldfield, 'and or' the meteoric Penelope – for all of whom he swore, in turn, that he would have died; and still he went on accumulating more. If any one lady slightly on the down grade in his esteem grew bothersome, Farquhar left town to look at a country cottage in which to install another lady who was on the rise. In choosing a place outside London he was particular: he must have a cottage with a brook running past it. His new mistress Celia deserved a brook, if for no other reason than her beautiful hands.

It was to Celia that Farquhar was now devoting such time as he could spare between writing, as a matter of pleasure, prologues and epilogues for friends whose new plays might benefit from the aid of a popular young dramatist, and editing, as a matter of profit, collections of his own love-letters and their answers, to be published as a remunerative by-product during the phenomenal run of *A Trip to the Jubilee*.

'I returned to town on Sunday,' he informed Celia in mid-week, 'but have been so tired with my journey that I have not been much abroad. Business will yet some days be so much my enemy as to deprive me of a possibility of seeing the charming original of that idea that has never been from me since I first saw you. . . . The retreat I have been to see is very charming indeed; yet it wants two things . . . a purling stream and such a Goddess of the Woods as you are. If you see Mr. B(re)t, tell him if he intends to communicate his affair to me it must be very soon . . . at my lodging to

appoint some hour that I can spare. I beg your pardon, Madam, that my letter to you contains anything but love . . . on the other hand, my love is beyond expression, for whatever I can say will never be so capable of expressing how much I love you so well as one hour's converse: nay, one look, one eloquent and expressive look, and one tender pressing with my transported hand . . . one ravishing kiss – but whither are my wild thoughts carrying me? To joys that no language and no tongue can tell. 'Tis heaven to have you, but without you hell. In spite of Mr. Collier I say so.' Farquhar here flew off upon a furious tangent against Jeremy Collier and the *Short View*: 'What! Do I lay a curse on him that Nature has cursed already, by an unsound mind incapable of love in an unsound body? She has made him a Jack-pudding, to please the town without being capable of receiving any joy himself. Now curses on him again for drawing me into this digression from the most charming of her sex.'

Celia replied with a warning that his absence had almost driven her to infidelity. This message, reaching Farquhar on the Friday, was untimely, for he found he had again to leave London for the week-end. Yet he begged her 'dear pretty hands' to assure him that she would see him at once upon his return. If only he could be persuaded to be prudent, he knew, he would 'industriously' avoid meeting Celia further. But the zest of his life was imprudence. What was he to say? 'Infidelity,' he charged her, 'is a heinous sin . . . you have but the word of any man for his love; pray let my word be taken as well as another's. . . . In our church we exclude all unbelievers from salvation.' And so George Farquhar took coach out of town, perhaps bent upon another look at that cottage without a purling stream. He left, but in leaving bore with him the thought that Celia had 'the prettiest hands in the world'.

Upon his return he was given to understand that a relenting Celia would shortly call. For two days he waited in his lodgings, in an agony of expectation from every knock on the door. She did not come. Was a woman's promise of the same nature as a courtier's, only a civil imposition, which with the knowing ought to go for nothing? The uncertainty was past

A MIDSUMMER ESCAPE

endurance. He could not study; he could not write. He accused her of barbarity, in neither casting him off nor easing his passion. He threatened to 'go lose himself' in the country indefinitely. And that fetched Celia at last.

As she lived with another young woman, whom Farquhar called her 'charming bedfellow', and his 'generous advocate', it was more agreeable to him that Celia should come to his lodgings. This she did, on a Sunday after his return. In the event, young Farquhar found she had not only the prettiest hands, but 'the prettiest eyes in the world'. 'Gods! the most charming face that ever I beheld! Indeed I never saw anything so very transportingly pretty. . . . The nearer you come to nature, the more charming you are, and must still be more so when you have less borrowed from dress.'

They arranged to meet again on the Wednesday. But Farquhar could not wait even that long without writing to her, although he had literary matters so urgently pressing him that he was obliged to quit his chambers of a morning by 8 or 9 o'clock. He went about his business, 'some of it very warm', yet was unable to put Celia out of his head for quarter of an hour. In the intervals of trafficking with publishers and managers he twice rushed outdoors, into the fields, to think only of Celia. Again, when he had to go from his lodgings to Jermyn Street, he walked 'as the nighest way' roundabout by Marylebone, 'because I could so have the longer time to think of my dear, dear charming Celia'. On his return, instead of taking the shortest way from Jermyn Street to Brook Street in Holborn, he sauntered through a field as far as Marylebone again, thence round to Gray's Inn Lane. This detour brought him home by 10 o'clock that night. He must sit down to write Celia all about it. 'By heaven!' he cried. 'I love you too extravagantly: but love comes on me now like a torrent . . . my love does but begin where other men's ends . . . I long, I am impatient for Wednesday morning . . . send me a word or two from your dear hands by the porter . . . love makes fools of us all . . . shall be at home I hope in the afternoon, at least by five or six o'clock in the evening . . . I am so full of expectation. . . .'

He may have given her excess of love, that, surfeiting, her appetite did sicken, and so die. Celia put in appearance at

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Gray's Inn Lane as agreed. After their meeting, she consented to still another rendezvous, within the next few days. But as the hour of it drew nearer, Farquhar, with no part of his soul his own, it being all hers, grew very uneasy lest she fail to turn up. On the day before the promised assignation he burst out: 'So much love has possession of me, I *am* love, as Cowley says. . . . Keep me your slave. . . . Come, oh come! to damn me entirely, if you will not save. If I must have hell, do you bring it. . . . Yet, remember, you destroy the most sincere, constant, and faithful of your lovers.'

How long a chain of lovers did Celia have? Farquhar thought everybody must love her, because she beyond question pleased everybody. For his part, he had no thoughts but to please her, nor any happiness without her being pleased. It was as if he had just been reading *As You Like It*, and had wandered into the Forest of Arden, but, himself enacting Oliver opposite the Celia in that play, had now added to his present part the sentiments of its banished Duke: 'Give me', said Farquhar, 'no joys that are loveless and unendeared; but give me Celia, kind, tender, just, quiet, soft retreat. Constancy, peace, murmuring brooks and tumbling streams, cool shades, and love in every place, in shades, in shine, in brooks, and glades, in Celia, who is herself a heaven and a paradise.'

No woman, however overlaid with passionate appeals, could resist being stirred by such vehemence. She *would* like to dine with him, she said, at three o'clock, and would come to his lodgings at any time between two and three. Farquhar laid in some oysters, to whet her appetite, and got ready a roast fowl; but, to ensure that he himself be not utterly let down, whatever happened, he ordered as well a fricassee of rabbits, a favourite dish of his own – as he later made an epicurean character in a play command 'a delicate couple of rabbits fricasseed'.

The lady did not arrive early, as she engaged to do. All was ready at three. Still Celia did not come. Farquhar patiently waited until four o'clock; and then he tore into his fricassee, actually with a relish. For nearly an hour Lucullus dined with Lucullus. Replete, he was yet by no means mollified; at five o'clock he turned to pen and paper

with as much indignation as he had set upon the rabbits with gusto – although, with sublime confidence, he carefully put aside the roast fowl, cold, in the belief that still later in the evening, after all, Celia might turn up. But to write to her was quite a different matter: ‘For God’s sake, Madam, let me know why you use me so. ’Tis not generous; and I hope I shall reflect enough upon it to endeavour to curb so unlucky a passion. A woman of honour should let no business make her break her repeated promise. I’m sure I would not let any hinder me of this day’s curse of expectation. If this be love, the devil take love, since it only qualifies a man to be used like a dog.’ Having so written, Farquhar was now sure Celia never intended to come, but wished only to make sport of him, whom she did not value, herself being so well furnished with others. Nevertheless he yearned to hear all that from her own lips. ‘Tell me that I am a troublesome, impertinent, and credulous coxcomb. . . . If it be possible, let me see you tonight. If you come not to me, I will to you. . . . I will wait at home till eight at night.’

That was the end of the affair between young George Farquhar and his Celia, his infallible lady, his everlasting charmer; and the end of the country cottage he was planning to establish her in. But he did not mope. Who else was there now? He had never quite relinquished his old love Susanna Carroll, that experienced lady his senior by ten years; and now in this forward month of June he resiliently took up with her again, assailing her affections with renewed vigour, ‘fat and merry’ as she was. Now was his soul tormented for want of her company; he loved her, he doted upon her, his passion made him mad when he was with her and desperate in her absence. If he was not odious to her eyes, she must give him some ease to the severest disquiets that ever touched his breast. He would obey her in every particular except in laying aside his passion. Was she not the first discoverer of those excellencies of which she said he was master? But he would not believe he possessed them until she showed some little signs of love, nor, much less, would he own to the charms which Susanna declared were his.

If this letter was merely the same tune played to a different lady, Farquhar got at least the requital of an articulate

answer. Mrs. Carroll was in her way not without literary gifts. But she dashed his romance by replying, 'I have got the toothache'.

Whose pangs were worse, hers or his? While thousands could judge of hers, not one in ten thousand ever really felt all that George Farquhar pretended to. "'Tis as natural,' said Susanna, 'for your sex to write and make love, as 'tis for ours to be caught by your flattering baits. But let me tell those too credulous nymphs' – she spoke from her ripened years and her memories of two husbands – 'they'll quickly find those ages of love, which they expect, reduced to some few days when once their lovers have reached the height of their desires.'

She had little idea that her friendship with George, as they had clearly agreed upon it, was to take this direction. She never meant to buy his conversation at the price of her repose. If he could continue writing on her own terms, she would be the happiest woman on earth; otherwise, they must desist, for she was weary of it. If he would openly own it raillery, he should be so answered. 'But these formal pretensions from a man of your sense would not be believed by any, and I'm certain did I incline to love you, you could no more return it than you would oblige a stranger with your estate did he want it. Therefore, pray, henceforth unmask and deal freely.'

'Unmask and deal freely with Astraea!' Farquhar swiftly responded. 'With all my heart, as soon as she pleases. I have no mask about me but my clothes, and those I'll quit at any time, to be more at liberty for a fair lady's service.' But it was barbarous to delight in persecution, to laugh at the cruelties which she exercised upon mankind. 'Good gods! what raillery is it to equal the toothache to the pains of unsuccessful love? There's no more comparison than there is betwixt the biting of a flea and the tickling of an incision-knife.' He intended to persecute her, and so tease her with letters and visits that at last she would be glad to oblige him with one favour to purchase another of ease to herself. 'I won't run the hazard of an assault, because I'm sure to have better success if I continue the siege.' He resolved to renounce the follies of wine, and begged to be admitted to a feast of love.

A MIDSUMMER ESCAPE

But Susanna insisted she would stick as fast to her opinion as martyrs to their religion. 'If you have my heart, you will certainly have all the train of impertinent follies that usually attend a woman's love, and which make a man study more how to quit, than ever he did to obtain – as, whither go you? where have you been? when will you come again? who's that lady you ogled at the play? Hey ho! you don't love me – and a thousand things more of this nature which in a little time render a mistress as tiresome as a wife to a man of sense.' How would he like rivals? For he must expect a thousand if she was such a person as she described.

The tug of war, for all of that, went on. Young Farquhar, at twenty-three, only sharpened his pursuit of this winsome lady so much nearer her middle years. 'I do feel the power of love, Astraea, nay, it's tyranny in earnest. 'Tis impossible to escape insensible from such charms as yours, and impossible to counterfeit such a passion as mine. I have had you in my arms all night, and if imagination is so charming, the delights of enjoyment will be too exquisite to be borne. Kill me then that way. . . .' He copied a love-letter out of a book she lent him, saying to her it expressed his thoughts far more happily than he could do. Susanna berated him for this, since not one word in that letter, she said, could be applied to her, and moreover, George Farquhar had no excuse for appropriating another's writing. 'Learning, wit, and eloquence are your inseparable companions; therefore borrowing is as unpardonable in you as in a miser. You ought rather to enrich the public, than encroach upon it.' But she added a surprising and exciting postscript: 'I fear I shall go to the play. I believe Astraea would be well enough pleased to find Celadon there.'

It sounded like her capitulation. Within this fortnight, this end of June, 'Suky' Carroll evidently accepted the embraces of George Farquhar. Then, in a matter of mere days, she began to fear that his ardour was cooling. He lent her a new book, by one John Asgill, a devotional but sensational book, which argued that man could be translated to eternal life without passing through death. But Suky acquired a pair of rabbits, which, as a leaven to a treatise upon so giddy a subject, might better beguile her solitude.

Then Farquhar without warning turned up one day at her lodgings, only to find her not in, and Susanna, who had meantime lost her pet animals almost as soon as she got them, turned the whole of these circumstances into a lament, with appropriate comparisons. 'I am extremely concerned,' she wrote her lover, 'at my ill fortune in being absent. . . . Could I have known by instinct that your visits were pretty well over . . . I would have waited with pleasure. I am going into mourning, for I have lost my rabbits, which makes me melancholy as a cat. As soon as I brought them home, I christened them, the male George, and the female Suky. George no sooner shared your name, but all your inclinations followed, which made him grow indifferent to his Suky; and on Sunday whilst I was at church he scampered away, and left his poor female overwhelmed with grief. . . . The next day I was reading Mr. Asgill . . . and Suky by me . . . bemoaning the loss of her beloved George, when of a sudden I missed her, and . . . she's nowhere to be found. She's I suppose bent upon pilgrimage till she finds her mate; except Asgill's doctrine had effect upon her, and mounted her to the heavens to provide a seat for her quondam master and mistress. Thus I have given you an account of my unhappy fate, by which you see that nothing of Male cares long for, Sir, your humble servant.'

But this George had his excuses for lacking time to call at the moment; he was encountering trouble about authors and publishers. His friend Sam Briscoe having gone bankrupt, this difficulty delayed the publication of some of Farquhar's own writings. Then Daniel Kendrick, a middle-aged versifier who figured in miscellanies, a man less skilled in poetry than in 'physic and divinity', attacked him in a booklet, *A New Session of Poets, Occasion'd by the Death of Dryden*. Kendrick, like other vermin of Parnassus unable to abide the continued extraordinary success of *A Trip to the Jubilee*, tried to dispose of its author both as a plagiarist of Etherege and as an alien interloper:

'Next Farquhar came, well hoping that the God
Would, what was favour'd by the town, applaud.
Then vainly reach'd him o'er that *Jubilee*,
Which only in the title-page we see.

A MIDSUMMER ESCAPE

Apollo told him, with a bended brow,
That Dorimant was Wildair long ago.
That it would much disgrace the throne of wit
If there an Irish deputy should sit;
And wonder'd why he'd longer here remain,
Who in his native bogs might just reign.'

Farquhar did not mind being accused of having profited from *The Man of Mode*. In this comedy of Etherege he, like Wilks, had acted in Dublin; it was difficult to improve upon the part of Dorimant, which Etherege himself had drawn from the living model of that prince of rakes, the Earl of Rochester. Beyond doubt Farquhar had put something of Etherege into Wildair; what Kendrick overlooked, but what the public of London seemed to understand quite well, was the better side of Wildair, original with his creator and superbly interpreted by Wilks.

As for being ruled out on the ground that he had come from Ireland, such a snarl was no less than what might have been expected from a pretender of the species of Kendrick, who, however, neglected his opportunity of saying the same thing of Farquhar's fellow-immigrant Congreve, not to mention two others, Swift and Steele, who were actually Irish born.

But just at this time emerged another backbiter who hurt. Ever since Farquhar had obliged John Oldmixon, the Somerset pamphleteer, with an epilogue for his quite hopeless play *The Grove*, which the audience had jeered because of its thoroughly bad romantic plot, Oldmixon, smarting from his failure, chose to think Farquhar partly responsible. As soon as Oldmixon got a chance to write a prologue for someone else he vilified Farquhar in it. The meanness of the attack was rather more than even the author of *A Trip to the Jubilee* thought fit to disregard. His first resentment, however, he confined to a letter to Suky, to whom he happened to be writing on the more important subject of rabbits:

'Did I think, Madam, that my visits were as agreeable to your inclinations as to my own, I would repeat them oftener; but I can't imagine, Madam, that a person whom you make a perfect *rabbit* of, should ever employ your thoughts, either with hopes or disappointments. Some think me a rabbit in

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

another case, because they imagine I have been digging a cunny-burrow in the country, and have saluted me with joy upon my marriage; but they should think me rather a fox, for I care not for earthing too long in the same hole, for fear I should be found out by the huntsmen. . . . But faith, Madam, I am at present more unhappy than the beasts of the field. . . . You have heard, I suppose, how scurrilously I have been abused by Mr. Oldmixon. I am now busy about the vindication of my honour, and endeavouring to answer him in his own kind.'

But the ingratitude of Oldmixon did not deter Farquhar from making prologues for others. David Crauford, a young Scot, had written in 'ten successive mornings' a play which he called *Courtship à la Mode*. He gave it to Betterton, then took it away owing to dilatoriness at Lincoln's Inn Fields, where after six weeks the actor Bowman had not got his part up, nor had more than a half dozen of the cast ever appeared at rehearsal. There may have been a reason. But Christopher Rich, at Drury Lane, seemed pleased to take something away from Betterton, and when Crauford offered this comedy Rich made it ready to open in under twenty days, arranging with Farquhar — now on the crest of popularity with everyone except Oldmixon — for a prologue. In the rush of preparation it is likely that Farquhar, busy with other things, had not even read the play, as his lines would suggest: . .

'The business of a prologue, who can say?
I think it has no business in a play.
For if the play be good it need not crave it;
If bad, no prologue in the world can save it.
But you plead custom for this needless evil.
Custom! why ay, this custom is the devil.
For custom chiefly all our ills insures,
'Tis custom makes men knaves, the women ——s.
You know the rhyme; if not, let each man ask
His pretty little neighbour in a mask.
Custom makes actors, poets, keep a pother,
And custom starves the one, and damns the other.
Custom makes modern critics snarl and bite,
And 'tis a very evil custom makes 'em write.
'Tis custom brings the spark to Sylvia's lap,
Custom undresses him, and custom gives a clap,
Why poets write ill plays, why maids miscarry;

A MIDSUMMER ESCAPE

Ask why beaux paint, they'll say 'tis customary.
Custom makes modern wives break marriage vows,
And custom damns most plays at t'other house.
'Tis custom makes our infant author fear,
And we plead custom for your kindness here.'

Unhappily this comedy, produced on July 9, incurred the usual tragedy of not reaching even its third night. Farquhar had tacked onto it a mere commentary on the times, being at the moment much more deeply engaged in his purpose to take a rap at Oldmixon. This chance occurred within the same week, July 13, the final night of the season for *A Trip to the Jubilee*, its fifty-third performance, a run which had broken all records in Drury Lane. The occasion was also an additional, and most unusual, extra benefit for Farquhar himself. His new prologue contained about forty lines, 'in answer to my very good friend Mr. Oldmixon, who, having two plays damned at the Old House, had a mind to curry favour to have a third damned at the New'. The substance of what Farquhar had to say he put in this fashion:

'Tis hard, the author of this play in view,
Should be condemned, purely for pleasing you:
Charged with a crime which you, his judges, own
Was only this, that he has pleased the town.
He touched no poet's verse, nor doctor's bills;
No friend to Blackmore, yet a friend to Will's.
No reputation stabbed by sour debate,
Nor had a hand in bankrupt Briscoe's fate . . .
Our plays are farce, because our House is cramped;
Their plays all good: for what? – because they're damned.
Because we pleasure you, you call us tools;
And 'cause you please yourselves, they call you fools. . . .'

The implications were sufficient to lay Oldmixon low, and the season closed, this night, in a triumph for George Farquhar, inasmuch as Drury Lane rejected the next piece submitted for production by his enemy. On the other hand, the notice which the record of *A Trip to the Jubilee* had evoked drew the eyes of the ladies upon its talented author all the more. Susanna Carroll burst into an epistle of three score verses to him, rising to this pitch of hospitality:

'The witty torments of th'infernal cell,
And all the sad variety of hell,
Where subtle fires in endless pity dwell,

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Much less, I say, can these fright from my breast
My dearest George, my only welcome guest. . . .'

Not content with that, she sent him a snuff box, inside the ornamented cover of which lay a woman asleep upon a couch, with a Cupid shooting at her. More verses, enclosed, Suky addressed to this Cupid, bidding him shoot an arrow, for her, into the heart of the 'roving youth', to whom the box was given. Susanna suspected a rival; but perhaps did not too seriously fear one. She knew that Farquhar was flirting with Mrs. Jane Wiseman (Why not? Had she not the same name as his old benefactor the Bishop?) an aspiring dramatist like herself, and to measure her own value in his eyes she determined to question that interloping lady.

The result was not too alarming. Mrs. Wiseman replied, also with an epistle in verse, that while she was fond of amorous George, whom she called 'Damon', she was equally taken up with another young man dubbed 'Amintor'. Susanna might well take the hint. Mrs. Wiseman, for her part, claimed no monopoly of Farquhar; other ladies might not go amiss if they yielded to him no larger share of their love than they expected of his in return. Thus she put her case:

'To surly Damon's conquering eyes
First my heart was made a prize;
But soon the bright Amintor came,
And then I felt another flame . . .
Generous Damon bears a mind
Above the treachery of his kind;
Untainted honour, manly sense,
Stern courage, and soft complaisance . . .
Damon, neglecting all, does rove,
A very infidel to love;
Without design or guilty art
He views the maid, and takes the heart:
Then free and thoughtless rambles on,
And scarce believes the mischief done . . .'

A rover to Suky, a Rambler to Jane; they agreed on that point at least.

Mrs. Carroll was not disturbed. Like Mrs. Wiseman she had another man in reserve, a man exactly her own age, thirty-three, and therefore perhaps a trifle less roving than young Farquhar: Susanna simply went back to the man from

the Midi, Abel Boyer. He, surprised and delighted, was in no time telling Mrs. Carroll that she was turning him from libertine to lover. And then the heartless woman, skipping off to East Anglia by the sea, left Boyer in town nonplussed. 'You've gained,' he wanly wrote after her, 'a victor's right o'er me as well as Celadon (Farquhar); and I expect you'll use me ill because he abused your mercy.' Boyer was right.

As for George Farquhar, the midsummer attraction competing against Susanna was a young woman of seventeen, just half Susanna's years. He met her by chance 'a-visiting'; he heard her sing; he saw she was no beauty, but found she had some wit; and the upshot was, 'the Devil tempted him to like her'. These particulars either fit the description of Anne Oldfield or approximate the circumstances of Farquhar's first meeting with her. The nymph may well have been Anne, who 'often said she spent many agreeable hours in Farquhar's company'. Yet the dramatist in his letters called his present beloved not Penelope but 'Chloe', and at least for the moment he concealed her identity from his friends, including Susanna. On the other hand he not only allowed Chloe to read Suky's letters to him, but thought it would be a good plan for Chloe herself to answer them.

Meanwhile Mrs. Carroll, though her country retreat put her at a disadvantage to observe what was going on in town, knew that someone more durably alluring than Jane Wiseman had stepped in. To this new charmer she paid due obeisance in a letter which she now sent to Farquhar, a letter pointed but tolerant, witty but concerned. Chloe, calmly instigated by Farquhar, answered it.

The girl's message to Susanna could scarcely be called soothing to that rather worried lady. Chloe said she found in Mrs. Carroll's letter 'more charms' than Susanna had allowed to Chloe herself. On the evidence of such a letter from Mrs. Carroll, a letter at once intelligent and endearing, Chloe would 'willingly quit all superiority of merit to his former mistress'. Why 'former'? thought Susanna. And yet, 'If you are not capable', said Chloe, 'of obliging him to constancy, the rest of our sex must decline all pretensions'. A crumb of comfort there, perhaps; if young George would not stick to Susanna, he would, all in good time, equally forsake her

usurper. 'If his stay in town,' Chloe ended this curious missive, 'be longer than he proposed, I believe indulgence for his natural disposition detains him with more prevalence than a passion for me: of which he will convince you by a very speedy departure, and perhaps with an unexpected store of love at his return to the charming Astraea, whose wit alone has wrought a most powerful value for you in the heart of the unfortunate Chloe.'

Susanna did not at once fall in with this rather brazen invitation to dispute possession of a worm with another chick. She preferred to bombard the faithless man himself. 'If I ever,' she addressed Farquhar, 'was leaning to the folly of love, Celadon has cured me effectually . . . bestow your gratitude on Chloe: I ne'er expected a return for any favour I bestowed . . . there needs no study to find you false, and not one art in Nature to make you true. Your whole sex is scarcely worth the trouble I have given myself about you . . . I had the curiosity to see if a man of sense could be guilty of the same errors the common stamp of men are; and now I am convinced that there's no more difference in the honour of mankind, relating to our sex, than there is between the King and beggar in the grave. I wonder Celadon should own an obligation to a person he did not think worth visiting when in town; one who compared to his charming Chloe seems so worthless that he cannot choose but curse himself for throwing away three minutes in writing to her. Perhaps you did it out of charity, imagining my condition desperate. Faith, Celadon, I am just as I was, fat and merry; I shall not fast and weep, but feast and laugh, which I think the properest ingredient to drive out all thoughts of an ungrateful lover.'

Mrs. Carroll nevertheless returned to town, the scene of this philandering, to hear from Farquhar that Chloe would call upon her; Susanna was to address the child at a certain coffee-house, making an appointment. Although the injured lady was unable to refrain from complying, she felt outraged when after waiting several days she received from Chloe not a word. Was this the 'innocent' rival, who had professed in her heart 'a most powerful value' for Susanna? Such conduct only freshened the outburst of Mrs. Carroll against the beleaguered Farquhar.

'Chloe was very unkind to you,' she assailed him, 'in not daring to stand by what she writ: I imagined a lady armed with the heart of Celadon durst to have met a poor abandoned wretch defenceless and alone. I answered to the coffee-house, as you directed, resolving not to balk your vanity. But upon second thoughts I find the lady has found out your relish; she does not think me worth seeing. . . . I don't doubt but she knows where to find me, if she has a mind to see one whom Celadon "would part from his eyes to have in his arms; whose conversation he could not lose and live". Oh! Celadon, for shame, give over this trade of lying, or on my conscience you'll forget to speak truth even in your prayers. . . . Had illness detained you from your journey, your chambers, or sister's (in Chelsea) had been the properest place of residence for you; but I am convinced you are a stranger to both.

'I commend your conduct: you are indeed constant for a time, and 'tis unreasonable for any woman to desire a man should be so any longer than 'tis in his nature. I wish Chloe may as freely leave you as I do, that you may pursue fresh conquests. . . . I shall say nothing of your exposing me to your mistress, since you have done me a piece of service by it, and taught me never to put it in the power of any man to abuse my easiness as you have done.'

Yet so conscious was Susanna of the mischievous nature of George Farquhar that she wondered, even now, whether Chloe was not a myth, whether the handwriting of this young woman, in letters purporting to come from her, was not Farquhar's own; there was certainly a resemblance. But the baffling Chloe, in another letter, disabused her. Farquhar, said Chloe, never tried to 'expose' Susanna, but merely wished to show Chloe that with so accomplished a rival as the elder lady, Chloe herself had no chance; the good nature of Susanna should not censure, but pity, this young man, who by taking up with so inferior a girl as Chloe had to suffer punishment enough, and who now beneath Susanna's accusation was only left surprised and confused. At all events, Chloe was resigning any pretensions to rivalry, and, asking of Susanna no more than her acquaintance, begged that she set a time for a meeting.

The answer from Mrs. Carroll was a curious mélange of relief, caution, generosity, and defiance. While she welcomed friendship with the child, she asserted indifference to the whole male sex. However, if 'villainous love had shot poison' into the breast of Chloe, and fixed therein the image of young Farquhar, he should reign undisturbed, and when the two women should meet, Susanna would talk of none but him. As for Chloe's offer to quit the man, whatever the motive behind that might be, 'Bring him along with you', Susanna dared to say, 'and you shall see with what serenity of mind I'll resign him into the arms of the incomparable Chloe'.

Had George at this turn not thought it well to disentangle himself from both of these ladies, at least temporarily, all three might indeed have soon gathered together as Susanna so openheartedly proposed. But the author of *A Trip to the Jubilee* was before long to go a journey abroad, and by way of preliminary to it he was escaping into the country. Here in town, ladies and gentlemen alike annoyed him, pestered him, trailed him about; he wished to shake off the lot. But, in view of his amorous escapades, could he so readily do so? In mid-July, just after he had departed from London, he received from one 'Mr. Charles Ustick' a challenge to a duel. The letter, sent in care of his sister in Chelsea, had by her been forwarded to Farquhar.

It appeared that the affronted gentleman, an earnest admirer of Mrs. Carroll, had in course of a walk down Bow Street been twitted because Farquhar 'made his mistress write to her'. The tone of that writing, further, appeared to reveal the intolerable fact that Farquhar had been intimate with both ladies. Mr. Ustick desired Mr. Farquhar either to meet with him at Mrs. Carroll's house or to leave a note for him at Tom's Coffee-house in Russell Street. 'If you are a gentleman,' the harsh words read, 'you'll give me satisfaction ere you leave the town, else I shall find you at your return'.

Although Farquhar had got away, he did not hesitate to reply in kind. 'You pretend,' he answered, 'to be a husband or a happy lover; whichever you are, I envy you, and wonder that one of your interest in her should . . . believe her virtue or conduct . . . inferior to the rest of the good qualities she

is mistress of. I'm not ashamed to admire her, but never obtained any favour from her to her shame or your dishonour. This I speak not out of fear, but for her justification, whose quiet I prefer to my own. I'm sorry yours did not come to my hands before I left the town. I shall . . . endeavour to kiss your hand in October, when you shall have what satisfaction you please: I shall be glad to see that envied happy man for whose sake I have been refused.'

From his country retreat George then sent to Susanna within a week three letters of repentance for his '14 days transgression' with Chloe. There was a good deal of atoning to do; upon quitting London he had not even bade Suky good-bye. But he considered his projected long severance from town, a matter of some two and a half months, no small penance in itself, quite enough in fact to earn him upon his return a restoration to the favours of this same Susanna.

He had now banished himself to a conversationless desert. Even the wenches, thus far, were repellant, 'unlicked creatures, so awkwardly innocent their virtue is not worth corrupting'. Of Susanna, before whom he could only grovel, he dared ask no forgiveness. 'Oh! I appear so horrid to myself, and bear such a load of shame about me, that if ever I should have leave to see your face again I don't believe I should have the confidence to approach you. Good gods! . . . I'm mad, and have no better plea than lunacy.' Yet his sanity suddenly reasserted itself as he thought of that challenge to a duel, and he informed Mrs. Carroll that by so employing a gentleman in her service she in truth greatly obliged George Farquhar, who upon his return would indeed step into the combat. Meantime would she not write to him in exile?

Susanna replied, but with all her guns. Her censure seemed hard, in view of his having acknowledged his fault instead of trying to justify it. All the harder was the censure of Susanna because her answer was laden with wit, nimble wit of the sort which deepened the creases in what Farquhar had done. He was afraid to be alone, lest the guilty ghost of himself should rise up in front of him and hand him a dagger; no villain in Shakespeare seemed ever so consumed by the apparition of his conscience. 'I blush as much,' he implored, 'when I look a woman in the face, as a young girl

does when first she has lost her maidenhead'. Will Wycherley, he said, reminded him that 'None can betray us but those we trust'. Farquhar could see no relief except in denying himself all the pleasures of man and womankind, and to that end he wished nothing more than a cell in Bedlam, for he was already three parts distracted.

Chaff, subterfuge, red herring, was all that Susanna Carroll derived therefrom. She thought it high time Mr. Farquhar sent back her letters, of which he certainly should receive no more. Unfortunately by such a request the callous woman laid herself open to still further temporizing, since, while Farquhar admitted he was now minded to do anything she asked, it would be some months before he should return to where the letters lay, and when that time came he really might not wish to give them up. (What if he were then in need of an honest penny? He should publish them.) He shrank from making a promise if it might have to be broken. Already, as things were, Suky was flaying him alive for inconstancy. 'Whoever,' replied Farquhar, 'should have told me a month ago that Celadon could have been tempted to be a rogue to Astraea, should as soon have made me believe that courtiers keep their words and citizens' wives are saints.'

No, he would retain henceforth the honesty in which his country hermitage was at present enveloping him. But he begged her to break her own word and resume writing whilst he should be abroad, a solace which she might grant him at least as long as she was remaining in town, through August, indeed, until she went off 'with her friend' at Michaelmas. 'Don't deny me the comfort of your letters; though they're angry ones, there's something in 'em most agreeably charming. When you tell me I'm a man you could have loved, methinks it shows you so generous, and myself so base, that nothing can exceed it. I don't think any man but he that first sinned was ever so great a bar to his own happiness.'

While Farquhar revealed to Susanna no fixed date for his sailing, there was in this letter, written on a Thursday, July 23, a clear enough hint that the journey was imminent. Six days later he posted across country to Harwich, where he

arrived about four o'clock that afternoon, and put up at an old inn.

This place he found 'extravagantly dear'. But he allowed it to be one of the 'cleanest and best-furnished in the kingdom'. While he enjoyed its accommodations, he was glad enough to cut short its expense upon finding that as early as 11 p.m. he could board the ship in which he was embarking. By midnight George Farquhar had made sail for Holland. Those whose discernment of his character has hardly kept pace with their patriotism have said he chose that territory for his outing because he 'thought a knowledge of the Dutch language was necessary to the interests of his countrymen'. What Farquhar expected to do in Holland was to see something of life, together with young officers in the armies of King William III.

CHAPTER IX

HOLIDAY IN

Holland

THE first man whom Farquhar fell in with aboard the boat was a very likable person who turned out to be a King's messenger. This emissary was hastening to William III with the news of the death on that day of the son of Princess Anne, the boy Duke of Gloucester, aged eleven. But neither Farquhar nor any other voyager felt much inclination to reflect upon this loss of the heir presumptive. Scarcely had the little ship cleared the harbour when a storm kicked up the waves to an appalling height, the boom of thunder nullified all speech, and the sailors groping in the blackness could do no work except when lightning showed them which way to turn.

George Farquhar retained just enough superstition about him to imagine that the tempest was a form of celestial grief over the loss of the young Duke; but for himself, with money in his pockets saved from his benefit nights of *A Trip to the Jubilee*, more money, he thought, than he had ever before carried on him, not excepting the day of his first arrival in London, he considered that he was 'never worse prepared' for death. This melancholy rumination found a kind of awful kinship with the sight of certain ladies aboard, who were 'so extremely sick that they often wished for death, but were damnably afraid of being drowned'.

While the weather cleared up on the Thursday, all young Farquhar remembered that went with it was a fresh gale, and cold chicken, and wine that strangely ebbed and flowed within him. On Friday morning they made the coast of Holland, the gale still pursuing, and the sea running high, so high that as Farquhar stood upon the poop taking his

HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND

first view of the Continent a great wave smacked the boat fore and aft and drenched him for a Dutchman. The Rhine, in consequence, impressed him rather more grimly than the Thames, as at about eleven o'clock they landed at the Brill.

That same day he went a walk round the town. It provided him with comparisons which he could hardly wait to put down on paper, for the enlightenment of his friend Sam Briscoe. The Dutch, it seemed to the visitor, were the greatest beaux in the world, their finery being both nobler and more substantial than any at White's. What was more, did not the gentility of the Dutch extend to their very canals? Farquhar never saw the fairest finest full-bottom wig in London, fixed to the most beautiful block in a side-box, look half so genteel as a Dutch canal with a stately row of flourishing trees on each side, and some twenty beautiful bridges laid across it.

He watched women scrubbing steps. 'I never knew,' he reported to Sam, 'a valet and barber with razors, tweezers, perfumes, and washes, work half so hard upon a gentleman's face . . . as I have seen a lusty Dutch woman with a mop and warm water scrub the marbles and tiles before the door, till she has scoured them brighter than any fop's complexion in the universe.' He observed men gliding by in their barges. No first-rate beau in England, drawn by his six before and six behind, lolling luxuriously in his coach, appeared half so gallant as a jolly Dutch skipper at the stern of his barge, with a furred cap like rays about his head, the helm in his hand, and his pipe in his mouth; with liberty seated in one whisker and property on t'other; and in this splendour making the tour of half a dozen fine cities in a day, without either qualm of the spleen or twinge of the gout. Such a person, Farquhar took to be a beau of the first magnitude.

Already he measured the Dutch as being 'much more gaudy' than the French, and with the advantage that the Dutch were gay without levity, and fine beyond foppery. Why be contemptuous of the Dutch, and admire the French, when the bravery of the Dutch caught the admiration of men, and the pageantry of the French drew only the eyes of women? English women thus cultivated an unreasonable

prejudice, and the men should take care, lest under the influence of such women they lapse into bondage to a master. But he was digressing. It only remained to tell the good Briscoe that George Farquhar, having exchanged one gold pistole for a heap of silver, was tarrying at a house kept by a Scotsman, where if the rooms were a paradise for cleanliness the host was a rogue for his reckoning. The guest, providently, was on the point of setting out for Rotterdam. For all that, Farquhar was on holiday; he was in Holland for his health; he assured Briscoe that London should not see young Farquhar again until he had not a pistole left.

If we set aside the banter in the foregoing report on his journey, and on what he saw upon landing on a foreign shore, we see with what a keen eye Farquhar was in the habit of observing all that went on round about him, individuals, their dress, customs, occupations, the set of the stage across which they moved. It was so that he studied London. It was this alertness of eye, of ear too, that stocked him with such abundance of the ingredients of comedy, and lent him accuracy in the delineation of character. His characters of Wildair, Standard, Lurewell, were true characters, because they spoke in the manner which Farquhar himself had heard spoken.

As he continued upon his travels, a letter from Susanna Carroll overtook him. Diligently at work upon her first play, *The Perjured Husband*, in which she was mingling comic scenes with tragic, and for which she was hoping to obtain autumn production, Suky had discerned between the lines of Farquhar's last flights of fancy a bit of a jest against herself. He had actually the temerity to propose that they forgive one another, as if they had been equally guilty. The lady was unable to swallow his impudence. She had decided to write once more – if indeed her letters gave him such comfort – and tell him she had a husband, the very man who was so set upon duelling. The circumstances of her wedded life she offered to reveal if Farquhar would in turn reveal the true name of Chloe.

'Chloe's name,' he briskly responded, 'would do you no service, unless you could tell where to write to her; she has lately miscarried and is gone out of town, I don't know

whither, nor do I believe I shall, till she or I return to London.

'I give you my word if she and you are in town at the same time in winter, you shall have a letter from her; shall know her name, and shall see her too if you please. If you expect a beauty, she won't answer expectation; she's but a girl, not eighteen; she sings tolerably, and you'll allow her to have some wit, if your taste and mine are alike . . . I had not the same motive to be false that you had, for I had never seen Chloe when I (first) loved Astraea . . . what provoked her (Chloe) to like me I can't imagine; you know best, if you don't banter me when you tell me you did not believe there was such a thing as a Chloe.'

He was amused to hear that Susanna had a 'husband'. That news made her appear to Farquhar 'more a mistress than ever', especially so, since she told Farquhar her passion for himself made her false to another she did not like. 'I see you follow Congreve's rule,' he observed, 'and don't think you can relish your lover without having a sufficient disgust for your husband.' Against that titbit he directed his fondness for logic: if Susanna's husband had been more agreeable, Farquhar had not been happy; had Farquhar been more constant to Susanna, the husband had not gained the place in her esteem he now held; for that reason, the man was obliged to Farquhar, whose ill conduct had procured for a husband that which with all his services he could not obtain for himself. (Had he not, in Trinity College, studied the 'Organon' of Aristotle?) Could Susanna any longer judge Mr. Farquhar unfavourably? He ended by asking her to send him the manuscript of her play to criticise, also any 'melancholy wit worth reading' which the death of the boy Duke of Gloucester might have evoked.

In the course of not very many days a further exchange of letters ensued. Mrs. Carroll thought Farquhar was lying about Chloe, and told him so. Farquhar protested he had divulged everything he knew, so help him God, and that he had not even heard of Chloe in over a fortnight. Nevertheless within another week – it was now mid-August – the indignant 'Mr. Ustick' prodded him with a postscript to the challenge, demanding that, as soon as might be, they fight

their duel in Aylesbury, which was, after all, a very pleasant town. 'You say true, sir,' replied Farquhar, 'Aylesbury is a very pleasant town, seated upon a hill, in the midst of a very fruitful valley, therefore much more proper for our business than Dunstable or Chipping-Wickham. Besides it luckily falls out that I have promised to use my interest there to make a vote for an honest churchman against the Whig Party.' But he would deal fairly: he warned his opponent that he, Farquhar, had become one of John Asgill's disciples – that man who preached eternal life without passing through death – and Farquhar, somewhat like Macbeth, firmly believed he should never be run through, nor hanged. If under these disadvantages Mr. Ustick still insisted, so be it; but Farquhar would have the dog-days over first, for it was hot riding; furthermore, he could not stop to fight until he had nothing else to do, and there were first some affairs to despatch.

These affairs having now led him to Rotterdam, Farquhar took a stroll one morning upon the Exchange. By the oddest chance he there met with an old friend from Dublin, one whom he had not seen in four or five years. This man was the merchant who, upon launching a new ship at that time, had entertained Farquhar with a bottle of claret and a neat's tongue. It now appeared that this very ship, cargo and all, had foundered upon her first voyage, and what with previous losses, her owner had been obliged to flee from Ireland bankrupt, to seek sanctuary among the Dutch. 'I still have', said the merchant, 'a glass of wine and a tongue at your service, if you would come and see me at my house this evening'.

Farquhar did go. To his surprise, he found the address given him to be a handsome house, which was, moreover, very agreeably furnished. Equally surprising was it to dine upon excellent meat, and as good Burgundy 'as ever joyed the heart of man'. He took the liberty of asking his host how a bankrupt could maintain such state. The merchant explained that whenever a man in any part of Europe had considerable trade with the Dutch, and could prove his honesty by his former accounts, but had met with losses beyond human control, the merchant in question could proceed to Holland and have the freedom of any port in the

State, and at the same time could borrow from them at 4 per cent. any sum he might need to re-establish himself. This Irish merchant had accordingly taken up £2,000. Within a few years he expected to be able to go back to Ireland and face his creditors. The shrewdness of the Dutch in thus increasing their own trade by trusting good men was manifest.

Nor, Farquhar discovered, were the Dutch the 'very great drunkards' which in England they were accounted to be. In the course of his daily rambles with friends both British and French he came upon but a single exception to the general sobriety. This happened aboard a canal-boat. He had observed whole families huddled together in these barges, families who held 'no more tenement on dry land than a Thames salmon'. In a certain great shoe of a boat which Farquhar and several fellow-travellers one day passed, the boat being tied up in its canal, there were living about sixty men, women, and children. One of those men was drunk, although no more than moderately bothersome, and several Englishmen not of Farquhar's party were making sport with him. This the rest of the Dutch did not fancy, lest it reflect upon their nation as a whole. But when, quite methodically, they seized their tipsy member, with intent to toss him overboard, Farquhar and his friends jumped to the rescue, and after a bit of skilful persuasion saved the man from a ducking.

With regard to the gentlefolk of Holland, the young man from Drury Lane noticed that while they were sociable enough within their own houses, they were seldom inclined to take much recreation or refreshment in public; sociability was very much an indoor family affair. Indeed, it seemed to Farquhar that places of public entertainment must close down but for the patronage of strangers. For his own part, he did all he could to keep them going.

In consequence, he was in September stricken with 'a very tedious fit of sickness'. Beneficial as a change may be, when sought for reasons of health, no constitution that is 'tender', even though strengthened and shielded by that change, can defy the dissipation which a man in holiday spirit commonly gives way to. Farquhar suffered an aggravated siege of the

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

illness which had beset him in the cellar of the tavern in London during the year before. There is no reason to believe that in Holland he exaggerated the seriousness of his attack when he wrote to Briscoe that it 'had almost sent your Friend a longer journey than he was willing to undertake at present'. Since Farquhar, with his thin cheeks and slender frame, was what has always been known as the 'consumptive type', his words to Briscoe do suggest lung trouble, for which, in the year 1700, not much could be prescribed but rest.

Early in October he reached Leyden, fairly well recuperated, and once more able to acquaint Sam Briscoe with tidings from this foreign land: its industry, which was as conspicuous as the luxury at home; its standing army, not half so expensive as the 50,000 lawyers kept by brawling England; and above all its religious freedom, how Protestants, Papists, Jews, Mahometans, Armenians and Greeks all swarmed together like a hive of bees without one sting. Young English nobility, he tartly noted, frolicking through with their French bear-leaders, saw that Amsterdam was a fine city, and the Hague a pretty village, but took away from Holland no knowledge of its laws or government, matters which might be really useful for them to know about when they reached home again. (Here was a sharp observation from a man little older, though better educated, than the young nobility he alluded to.)

Farquhar would now have embarked for England himself, but was kept at the Hague by equinoctial storms, which for a full fortnight made of Holland 'no more at present than a great leaky man-of-war, tossing on the ocean, and the mariners forced to pump night and day to keep the vessel above water'. Cellars and canals 'had frequent communication'. A man who could lodge in a garret was counted lucky. Lookouts perched upon all the steeples, eager to win rewards promised to those who could make the first land. 'They had more need,' commented Farquhar as he surveyed the spread of the water, 'to look out for a rainbow, for without that I shall believe that God Almighty, in his articles with Noah after the flood, has excluded the Dutch out of the treaty'.

This unruly overflow incited him to make a poem to that fair one in England to whom (he said) he most desired to

HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND

return. 'To a Lady,' Farquhar entitled it, 'being detain'd from visiting her by a Storm'.

'So poor Leander view'd the Sestian shore,
Whilst winds and waves opposed his passage o'er;
More moist with tears, because by floods restrained,
Than in these floods had he his wish obtained;
So drown'd, yet burnt within, upon the banks he leaned,
Leaned begging calms, and as he begging lay,
Implored with sighs the winds, with tears the sea.
One would have thought by all these mixtures sent,
To raise a second greater storm he meant.
Just so whilst kept from you by storms I weep,
The winds my sighs, my tears augment the deep;
With flowing eyes I view the distant side,
The space that parts us doth myself divide.
Here's only left the poor external part,
Whilst you, where'er you move, possess my heart.
Deprived of love and your best sight I die,
Whilst you the first, and storms the last, deny.'

Having stirred together a 'mixture' as various as that of Leander himself, the exile despatched his remedy in the hope that it would prove an aphrodisiac. The tone of a letter which he wrote at about the same time (October 12) suggests that both letter and poem were addressed to the same lady: 'This is the second post, dear Madam, since I have heard from you, which makes me apprehensive that you are not well, or that you have forgot the person whose health and welfare so entirely depends upon yours . . . my words, my letters, and endeavours have unfeignedly run upon the strain of the most real passion that ever possessed the breast of man; and if . . . they should all prove vain . . . how poor an opinion I should have of my understanding . . . a very mortifying thought for a person who is very unwilling to pass for a fool. . . . I have laid out all the little sense I had in your service, and if it should be cast away, I should . . . run stark mad upon the loss. For God's sake, Madam, let me know what I have to trust to. . . .'

Sadly it seemed a case of 'out of sight out of mind' with this lady, as well as with any of the other women whom he had left behind. Nor was he finding the women of Holland – nor much else in this little country – in any marked degree

to his fastidious liking. 'A Dutch woman,' he afterward wrote, 'too compact, nay, everything among 'em is so; a Dutch man is thick, a Dutch woman is squab, a Dutch horse is round, a Dutch dog is short, a Dutch ship is broad-bottomed; and, in short, one would swear the whole products of the country were cast in the same mould with their cheeses.'

But George Farquhar was not forlorn. For company he had the young officers in the King's train. Only the night before, October 11, at about eleven o'clock, William III, done with his summer campaign, had arrived in the Hague from Loo, at which place his favourite, the Earl of Albemarle, had been presenting him to the Polish Envoy. Albemarle, now thirty-one, was handsome and cheerful, open-handed and obliging, a man of winning manners. But a Court imposed restraints which he disliked; quite absorbed in his own pleasures, he preferred to follow the King afield, and as colonel of the first troop of Horse Guards to share in all of the King's recreations. The young Earl of Westmorland, a boy of eighteen, was another of the set. Just out of Oxford and into the Army, he was still watched over from afar by his mother. That good lady, having for the day of the King's arrival at the Hague sent Westmorland a pot of English venison, the boy at once regaled his friends, and George Farquhar, no doubt as a distinguished fellow-Londoner in a foreign land, happened by good fortune to fall in with this party.

'Never,' he wrote in an account of it to one of his London lasses, 'was poor buck so devoured by hungry hounds. We hunted him down with excellent Burgundy. Could this place afford as good toasts as it does wine, 'twere a paradise. But we made a shift to call you all over, every beauty in London, from the Duchess of Grafton to Mr. B——le; and when we got drunk, we toasted the Dutch ladies; and by the time we got through the whole assembly we were grown as dull and sottish as if we had lain with them.' Isabella Bennet, Dowager Duchess of Grafton, friend of John Hopkins' 'Amasia', and formerly the wife of a son of Charles II by Barbara Villiers, had just two years before married Thomas Hanmer, nephew and heir of the baronet of that name, and a

HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND

rising young Tory politician. His Duchess was a national toast of the day, for 'her sweetness and beauty were universally commended'.

Celebrations of this nature were not the only thing consequent upon stormy seas and detention in Holland. In his idleness Farquhar began to shape a new play. He decided to risk a sequel to *A Trip to the Jubilee*. Had not Sir Harry Wildair won fifty-three nights in Drury Lane, not to mention twenty-three more with Ashbury's capable company in Smock Alley? Why not capitalize further on so popular a character ready made? His inventor decided to call his sequel boldly by that name, *Sir Harry Wildair*, relying again upon the captivating Bob Wilks in the part. To this work Farquhar's young military companions were something of an inspiration, so much so, in fact, that he resolved to dedicate the comedy to Albemarle. Indeed the circle of these gentlemen in the Hague was faintly suggestive of certain ancient and immortal forerunners: Farquhar imagined the King as Augustus, Albemarle as Maecenas, and himself as either Virgil or Horace – it did not much matter. Albemarle, at least, liked the compliment.

Whilst they were all a few days later making ready to return to England, the King himself having planned to sail on the Wednesday following his arrival in the Hague, Farquhar encountered by chance a lady compatriot in danger. A traveller, and knowing neither Holland nor its language, she had fallen into the hands of scheming men who designed to rob her of all she possessed. She had neither relations nor friends within call. Young Farquhar, gallantly intervening on the spot, extricated her from her difficulties.

He would assuredly have improved his acquaintance had he not been called away near the end of October to join the King's party of embarkation. As it was, he returned to England, no little encouraged in the company of friends so influential, and 'wearing one of England's earliest military red coats'.

This return put him in the way of immediate news of Susanna Carroll's first play, *The Perjured Husband*. It was a Venetian piece, somewhat on the order of the *Venice Preserved* of Otway, but with comic scenes rather more pro-

nounced. The play, its tragic scenes bad and its comic ones good, had gained mild success at Drury Lane, and was chiefly interesting to Farquhar by reason of its central woman character, Aurelia, capably acted by Anne Oldfield. But it was neither Anne nor Susanna, neither Chloe nor Astraea, nor yet a duel in Aylesbury with Mr. Ustick, that dominated the attention of George Farquhar fresh from his holiday.

Oddly enough the lady whom he had lately rescued abroad from the knaves returned to London shortly after himself, and Farquhar, apprised of her arrival, lost no time in greeting her, for, after all, he was not at the moment otherwise absorbed. She was a single lady of means, with 'fine clothes and trinkets', and she lived with a very good and worthy gentleman who was to her 'both a friend and a father'. Farquhar laid siege.

He pursued her from place to place, from town to country, and indeed, as he put it, from kingdom to kingdom. Unlike his affairs with the long chain of her predecessors, this was a serious business. For the first time he wanted to marry, to be a husband. Again and again he 'begged earnestly'. Week after week he 'long solicited for the honour of the place'. A little thief had 'stolen his heart out of his very breast'. The lady so grateful to her rescuer in Holland but so forgetful of her rescue now that she was safely at home had cost him 'more sighs and uneasiness than all the wealth in the world could have done'. Would she 'neglect the protection that Providence had designed for her'?

She would. Amused, attentive, even receptive, she put him off. Framed in the maddening scenery of her worldly goods, she still resisted him, for all his eloquence. What, then, did this bewitching creature require of a suitor? A little further observation, perhaps? More evidence of stability? Much more evidence of a settled career?

When Farquhar was baffled in love, he was nevertheless incapable of sagging into melancholy. Whether in quest of wife or mistress his recovery from frustration was like the bounce of a ball: before he knew it he was up in the same air again. The one essential was that there must be an alternative woman in the offing. It mattered very little which woman, this other one might be; any woman of

moderate attractiveness was enough to set his fancy awhirl, and to her he instantly pinned his devotion, he cared not how, when, nor where.

Upon a certain Sunday he strolled by chance into a church. Its service did as usual not distract him: Farquhar took immediate notice of a little lady in black who happened to be sitting at his right. They exchanged looks; he thought her winsome, and he determined to find out what she thought of him; in fact, his eagerness so increased that the ardent young man could only with difficulty remain in his pew until after the sermon. He then rushed out ahead, and hurriedly penned a few lines to be placed in the hand of the lady before she vanished:

‘I came, I saw, and was conquered . . . where others go to save their souls, there have I lost mine; but I hope that Divinity which has the justest title to its service has received it. . . . Nothing upon earth, Madam, can charm beyond your wit but your beauty; after this, not to love you would proclaim me a fool; and to say I did, when I thought otherwise, would pronounce me a knave. If anybody called me either, I should resent it; and if you but think me either, I shall break my heart. You have already, Madam, seen enough of me to create a liking or an aversion. Your sense is above your sex; then let your proceeding be so likewise, and tell me plainly what I have to hope for. . . . After a sight of such a face, whose whole composition is a smile of good nature, why should I be so unjust as to suspect you of cruelty? Let me either live in London and be happy, or retire again to my desert . . . but let me beg to receive my sentence from your own mouth, that I may hear you speak, and see you look at the same time. . . .’

Farquhar made a dash to deliver this supplication, and he thought he saw in the distance the lady in question. To make sure, he added a postscript: ‘If you are not the lady in mourning that sat upon my right hand at church, you may go to the devil, for I’m sure you are a witch.’

By Monday midnight he had found where she lived, and with whom – another lady, one perhaps amenable to serving as go-between. This advance in the campaign called for a second importunate billet-doux: ‘Give me leave to call you

dear Madam, and to tell you that I am now stepping into bed, and that I speak with as much sincerity as if I were stepping into my grave. Sleep is so great an emblem of death that my words ought to be as real as if I were never to waken. Then may I never again be blest with the light of the sun, and the joys of Wednesday (the date he proposed for a first meeting) if you are not as dear to me as my hopes of waking health tomorrow morning. Your charms lead me, my inclinations prompt me, and my reason confirms me. . . . My humble service to the lady who, next to my Saviour, must be my chief mediator for my happiness.'

This fetched from the lady in black – or at least so Farquhar thought she was – a reply by return. Her handwriting was barely legible. But after conveying that he had mistaken her for someone else, and that she herself had only seen him of an evening when she was wearing a mask, she proceeded to admonish him. To begin with, he ought not to wander, for wandering was a bad habit in men; furthermore, he should not plight his affection, for in so doing he was swearing to a known lie.

George Farquhar could not wait to finish dressing before he sat down to answer. 'Tuesday morning,' he began it, 'one stocking on and t'other off'. Her hand was as great a riddle as her face; it was as difficult to decipher as to know her beauty behind her mask. 'But I have at last conquered the maidenhead of your writing, as I hope I shall one day that of your person; and I'm sure you haven't lost your virginity if the lines in your complexion be half so crooked as those in your letter.' He himself then proceeded to a bit of advising: first, if she was not handsome, she must never show a face that might repel an admirer of her wit; second, as long as she with her mask wore a double face, she must beware of the double meanings with which gentlemen then spoke to her; lastly, she must never advise a man against wandering if she designed to be his guide. Had he sworn to a known lie? 'I don't remember, Madam, that I ever swore I loved you, though I must confess that a little lady in a half-mourning mantua and a deep mourning complexion has run in my head so much since Monday night that I'm afraid she will soon get into my heart.'

HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND

There was in these somersaults of words nothing that would very definitely drive a woman away. For the Wednesday, the day following, she promised him an early evening rendezvous, at Bedlam, that 'sweetly placed' hospital in Moorfields. Farquhar, only too willing, went, and waited, and expected; he cooled his heels until 7 o'clock, and the minx never came within eyeshot. Having walked himself into vexation, up and down, across and back, not unlike the lunatics within, he departed, not to pine away in a lonesome bed, but to a tavern, where humankind were more dependable.

Enough diversion was going on over the cups to keep him there all night. When finally he reached his own lodging once more it was 11 o'clock the next morning; a short letter of apology from the coy lady who had failed to turn up greeted him, but hardly soothed him. A friend from the country had just invited young Farquhar to Essex, for a bit of hunting; the letter from the disappointing lady contained nothing worth deterring him from that journey.

'Bo-peep,' he addressed the Bedlam-shy creature, 'is child's play, and 'tis time for a man to be tired of it'. Had he not been a fool to wait at such a place as Bedlam? Could she herself have possibly gone there unless she had been mad? He believed those inside were the wise ones, and they who put them in the possessed. 'They (the inmates) at least have this advantage over us lunatics at liberty, that they find pleasure in their frenzy, and we a torment in our reason.' Now, similar to the case two days earlier, with a stocking off and the other on, he was sitting with one boot on and t'other off, and if 'love and honour' were waging a battle in his thoughts, love was being put to rout, for his friend was on the threshold, to take him away at once to Essex. 'A word of advice,' he icily ended, 'before we part. Pray consider, Madam, whether your good or ill stars have usually the most ascendant over your inclinations, and accordingly prosecute your intentions of corresponding . . . would you be advised by me, you would let it alone, for . . . I guess at the greater disturbance of being farther exposed to your charms, unless I may hope for something which my vanity is too weak to ensure. Fortune has always been my adversary; and I may

conclude that woman, who is much of her nature, may use me the same way; but if you prove as blind as she, you may perhaps love me as much as she hates me. My humble service to your two Sister Fairies, and the devil take you all.' But to this ruffled rebuff he added a teasing postscript: 'If you will answer this – you may'.

His permission was condescending enough to win a reply. The lady in the black mantua was all for making her peace with this eminent young man of letters who so abruptly, so unexpectedly, seemed able to dispense with her wiles. But she had blotted her copy-book by failing him at Bedlam. Farquhar in answering her answer was airy, wary, a bit disdainful, and as vulgar as it pleased him to be. A-horseback of an early November morning, he came in to write her a lesson, a grave lesson, to show the wench how men can deal with women who presume to trifle with them, and still to such women be not unflattering. His saddle this morning had been uneasy. The hare they hunted, he told her, put him in mind of a mistress whom 'we must gallop after with a hazard of breaking our necks, and after all our pains, the puss may prove a witch at the long run'.

He owned to nostalgia, for since leaving town he had caught no female company, with which Drury Lane in the ordinary way so amply provided him. 'Your Essex women, like your Essex calves, are only butcher's meat, and if I must cater for myself, commend me to a pit partridge, which comes pretty cheap, and where I have my choice of a whole covey'. But the analogy must be made personal. 'How well I love this kind of meat you may guess when I assure you that I have purely fed upon your idea ever since, which has stuck as close to me – (let the comparison be made earthy) – as my shirt, which by the way I haven't shifted since I came into the country, for clean linen is not so modish here as a lover might require.'

The next step was to assure her that she had a rival, but not one to be feared. 'I received just now an impertinent piece of banter from an angry fair. She says I pawned my soul to the devil for the great success of my play. But her ladyship is thus angry because I would not pawn my body to the devil for another sort of play, of which I presume the

lady to be a very competent judge. I shall disappoint her now as formerly, for I will set her raging mad with the calmness of my answer.'

Yet the crossfire of Farquhar's method did not stop here. He went on to tell the lady in black that nothing in the same post that brought him a letter from her could put him out of humour. However, he must in plain terms say this much: 'I begin to have but a mean opinion of your beauty, for were it in the least parallel to your wit, the number of your other conquests would raise your vanity above any correspondence with a person whose chief merit is his indifference.' Was ever woman by such tactics lost? She knew she was good-looking; of that it were tedious to hear. But she had not been quite so sure of her wit. Mr. Farquhar was very discerning.

After a bracing holiday he returned to London, to engage not so much in shooting pit partridges as to work upon something to attract them – his new play, *Sir Harry Wildair*. This comedy, being a sequel, was easy enough to get on with, in particular as most of the actors who had been in *A Trip to the Jubilee* were ready to continue the adventures. A full year had elapsed since the first night of the *Jubilee*. In that time Robert Wilks had acted no part in a new play comparable to *Wildair*, and he was naturally not averse to a second edition of his own and Farquhar's distinguished success. To make the plan still smoother for both dramatist and star, the scheme was to eliminate George Powell, the eccentric inebriate, whose leadership in the company rather stood in the way of Wilks, and to give the part of Col. Standard to John Mills, Wilks's brother-in-law, who in the *Jubilee* had played Vizard. Further in the new play Pinkey was to repeat as Clincher, the Jubilee beau, but now turned politician; his servant, 'Jubilee Dicky' Norris, was to become *Wildair's* servant; twittering Mrs. Verbruggen to reappear in the part of Lady Lurewell, while Mrs. Rogers, staid but beautiful, would continue as Angelica. A great loss was Joe Haines, who was ailing this winter, and could not be cast. Farquhar had a new servant part in mind for Fairbank, who had taken a similar role in *Love and a Bottle*. But the most notable newcomer to Farquhar was Colley Cibber, too good a character to be any longer left out of Farquhar's plays, a man firmly in

the public mind as Lord Foppington, like Norris as Dicky; for Cibber, the author had the part of Monsieur Marquis, a sharpening refugee. The remaining important bit was to be another new character, Fireball, a sea captain, written for Benjamin Johnson, who in the *Jubilee* had been well seen as Smuggler.

Johnson it was who at about this time informed Farquhar of a mutual friend of theirs, a man in love, a man who desired advice in that situation. Described as Mr. R—— S——, this gentleman was possibly Captain Richard Steele, who, as it happened, was at the very moment rather deeply in an affair with Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late Richard Tonson, the publisher. Steele was now twenty-eight, and Farquhar twenty-three; they were well acquainted with each other from meeting with the wits at Will's; and while Steele had written nothing but minor verse, and Farquhar was accomplished both as a dramatist and an amorist, the tone of the letter which Farquhar hereupon attempted was that of a younger man addressing one older:

'I have long wished, Sir, for an opportunity of serving you, and I thank fortune which has now presented me so fair an occasion.' Like chemistry, he said, love was very chargeable in experiments, and worth nothing in the enjoyment. (Steele at the moment was addicted as well to dabbling in alchemy.) It was a misfortune that love could only be nourished by ingenious men, whilst women admired none but fools; success in this case, therefore, would probably prove but indifferent. However, this particular affection, as Benjamin Johnson described it, was much too violent to last.

Rather magisterially Farquhar went on to say that he had known not one woman, but several. 'They all,' he observed, 'wear blacker masks on their minds than on their faces'. If men had heavenly souls and earthy bodies, women were the exact opposite. A woman of extraordinary beauty was only qualified for a whore, and one of uncommon sense only for a jilt. For all a woman's 'irresistible arts and tricks', a monkey had twice as many, and was twice as witty and surprising. It was our fancy, only, that made a devil into an angel, and when once love came to be heightened by thought, it was like the study of the black art.

Yet young Farquhar confessed to Mr. R—— S—— that at this instant he himself had a mistress whom he loved dearly. (Was it the lady in black, whose letters pursued him to Essex, or that lady home from Holland, whom he had pursued in London?) ‘My love,’ he declared, ‘is a down-right syllogism. Her beauty and wit are major and minor, and my passion is the conclusion’. But if he found either premise false (and 10 to 1 he should) he held the same thread of reason to guide him out of the labyrinth which led him in. ‘Some will say,’ concluded Farquhar with a flourish, ‘that a mistress is a pretty amusement in a man’s studies; but my observation can allow it no less than the ruin and destruction of study, for a man must make it his business to gain her, and afterwards she will make it her business to disturb him; you may, perhaps, find innocency in the country; but remember, that Eve lost her maidenhead in a garden.’

It was into a garden, indeed, Gray’s Inn Walks, that Dick Steele led Elizabeth Tonson. If it was Steele to whom Farquhar was addressing this advice, Farquhar proved to be right on at least one point: the love in question was too violent to last. After getting Elizabeth with child, Captain Steele was overcome with contrition, and, his company of troops being transferred to the Tower Guard for this winter of 1700–01, he passed the cold and lonely nights in writing a tract, *The Christian Hero*, which was an argument to prove that no principles but those of religion are sufficient to make a great man. But the effect of all that upon himself, among other consequences, was to cause him to depart from Elizabeth.

At this same time George Farquhar, working in February upon his new play, fell ill of rheumatism, which settled as once before in his hand, and he could not write. The attack may have been an aftermath of the illness which he had incurred in Holland. Withdrawing to Richmond, he hoped to convalesce more speedily in the fresher air, but found, ‘after so much bleeding’, that this air was ‘too piercing’, and in the retreat he had chosen he had to keep indoors. Whilst he was in this dolorous state a letter reached him from none other than the lady whom he had rescued at the Hague.

Why had she written to him? It must have been the association of ideas: the robbery of her attempted in Holland had in England been actually carried out. She wrote to say that a thief had broken into her bedchamber and stolen her fine things, her best clothes, her trinkets. Early in the morning had this happened, yet not before all the world was awake; it was graver that a burglary had come off in a house so well staffed with servants.

For the first time since he had left London, Farquhar was suddenly conscious that his hand was able to hold a pen. To comfort the distressed lady, who seemed less protected at home than abroad, he reminded her that her clothes had been worn out in a year or two, that her fine things had been out of fashion in a year or two more, and that she had thus lost only the use of those things which the passage of four or five years would have robbed her of anyhow, without breaking a lock or opening a window. But there was one side of this mishap that was a comfort to Farquhar himself.

He guessed at her present thoughts upon that episode in the Hague. These he set down as if it were the lady who was speaking: 'I recollect that some few months ago I was in a foreign country, far from my relations to comfort me, or friends to assist me; a stranger to the place, more to the language; like a child among savage beasts, I had no companion but a brute more savage than they, who betrayed me into the hands of a villain that would have ruined me past redemption had not Providence sent a gentleman to my rescue, who is now at Richmond dying for love of me. This deliverance, I think, may make amends for the present loss.'

Now that he had guessed, he begged to offer his own sentiments, which were, that if the rogues had stript her of all that she enjoyed in the world, even 'the white covering to her fair nakedness', he would catch her in his arms before any duchess in Christendom set out in brocade and jewels. A lady without a husband lay very much exposed to all abuses from the rude world. A husband was still the best garde-du-corps, and there were some privileges annexed to his place which would make rogues more cautious how they invaded her bedchamber. If a lady would neglect such protection, when there was one who had begged to give it, it was but

HOLIDAY IN HOLLAND

just that she should meet with some small rubs. Upon the thief she would be very severe if he were caught. Then what must he, George Farquhar, think of a person that has robbed him of a jewel more precious than any taken from her, that is, his ease and quiet? A little thief had stolen his heart out of his very breast, the loss of which had cost him more sighs and uneasiness than all the wealth in the world could have done. This charming bandit he had pursued from place to place, from town to country, from kingdom to kingdom, yet all in vain. Farquhar besought the plundered lady, therefore, to be not too merciless upon those who had robbed her, though they should be taken.

Be that as it might, he refused, ill or well, to wait longer than three or four more days before calling upon her. Had she not reopened the gates? 'That you have been,' he elegantly assured her, 'so long released from my company, you are more beholden to the force of my illness than the strength of my resolution.'

Little did she know of the lady in black. As for young Farquhar, he seemed for the time being to know rather less. But he had often betrayed that state of mind even when not hampered by rheumatism.

CHAPTER X

DRURY LANE AGAIN

DURING this winter Sam Briscoe, in whose resurgence from bankruptcy Farquhar out of fondness for the man as a friend was interested, persuaded the dramatist to write him a pamphlet, to be called 'A Discourse upon Comedy'. The persuasion required need not have been too strong, even at a time when Farquhar was occupied in shaping for spring production his third play. While Farquhar pretended (to Briscoe) that he was no authority on the subject, neither philosopher nor critic, in fact this rising star of comedy held very decided views about his craft, views which he had begun to form as early as his acting days in Dublin. With these views, of course, he had already made a start in print. It was in the guise of Peregrine debating with Selinda in *Adventures of Covent Garden*. No irksome task was it to Farquhar, therefore, with all his bubbling volubility, to sit down to about 8,000 words upon the topic of what he wrote and why he wrote it.

As Sam Briscoe well knew, Congreve, in the year of his high success with *Love for Love*, had turned out a brilliant and widely read *Essay Concerning Humour in Comedy*. Why should not a younger author, whose impact upon Drury Lane was quite comparable to that made by Congreve at his start ten years before, catch equal notice with a similar pamphlet now?

Farquhar began his discourse with a burst of affected impatience at the capacity of an audience, 'the weak-sighted vulgar', to judge a work of art. As for the critics, not one in twenty had read even Porphyry's *Isagoge*. The clergyman, the physician, the barrister, the mathematician, all cast an undisputed spell over their hearers, who sat gaping and credulous before them. But what was the lot of the poet,

whom these same hearers venerated still more, yet rent in tatters whatever he wrote? 'The favour of being whipt at school,' said Farquhar of them, 'for Martial's epigrams or Ovid's epistles, is sufficient privilege for turning pedagogue, and lashing all their successors; and it would seem by the fury of their correction that the ends of the rod were still in their buttocks. The scholar calls upon us for decorum and economy; the courtier cries out for wit and purity of style; the citizen for humour and ridicule; the divines threaten us for immodesty; and the ladies will have an intrigue . . . everyone is a critic after his own way; that is, such a play is best because I like it.'

To what could the author look for redress? Must he not try to please those of his audience 'who can lay the best claim to a judicious and impartial reflection'? Who were they? The scholars? Farquhar objected, for there was such a thing as reason without syllogism, knowledge without Aristotle, and languages besides Greek and Latin. Who demanded reason of that sort? The pit full of Covent Garden gentlemen, the gallery full of citts, a hundred ladies of Court-education, and two hundred footmen.

But the Scholar would uplift the English audience, so long damped by such wretched stuff as your *Jubilees* and your *Foppingtons*. Down from the high shelf, dislodging the moths from their tenements of years, the Scholar took Aristotle, Scaliger, Horace, Vossius, Heinsius, Hedelin, Rapin, whence he found unity of action, continuity, extent of time, preparation of incidents, episodes, narrations, deliberations, didactics, pathetics, monologues, figures, intervals, catastrophes, choruses, scenes, machines, decorations - 'a stock sufficient to set up any mountebank in Christendom'. The idea was to please not the vulgar, but 'the better sort', like himself. A single plot, to adhere to the regularity of criticism, regardless of diversion or surprise, no song nor dance, no variety of incident, nor of painting nor prospect. Christopher Rich might venture £150 on staging it, for it was written by a great Scholar, and a Fellow of a College.

Weaned from his nurses in Trinity College, George Farquhar took impish delight in cudgelling them. On such a

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

work by a Scholar, he went on, the players could no more show their art than a carpenter could upon a piece of steel. Lamp and scholar were no substitutes for the true genius of poetry, the natural air of free conversation. Regular as Aristotle, modest as Mr. Collier could wish, that play could beget more lewdness than any old libertine in London. In the end the patentees railed at the author, the actors cursed him, the town damned him, and he might bury his copy in Paul's, for certainly no bookseller would print it..

Farquhar simply came out against those who venerated antiquity at the expense of their own day. He himself found the world 'never more active and youthful' than at the moment, whether the land were England or France, Sweden or Italy. Why should to-day's poets have to be hoodwinked by Aristotle? Why should what was received in Athens 2,000 years ago have to be accepted in London now? Why should Aristotle, who never wrote poetry, set up to be a dictator in poetry? (A bit of the tongue in a bit of the cheek here.) Although it was true that Aristotle drew his rules from Homer, and Homer must be admitted the world's greatest poet, how could one know that Homer wrote his *Iliad*, 'a free and unlimited flight of imagination', according to such rules? Homer left no rules, for to describe the spirit of poetry, which alone was the true art of poetry, he knew to be as impossible as to teach the gift of prophecy by definition.

To deal with comedy specifically, then, to reach back to its origins, its first invention, in order to examine its nature even in the present circumstances, Farquhar looked into neither Aristophanes nor Menander, but into old Aesop.

'Comedy,' observed Farquhar, arriving at his definition, 'is no more at present than a well-framed tale handsomely told, as an agreeable vehicle for counsel or reproof'. Tyrant Lion, Statesman Fox, Beau Magpie, Coward Hare, Bravo Ass, and Buffoon Ape – these were all still on the stage, except that in Aesop their stories were shorter, and whereas in Aesop the beasts spoke good Greek, the heroes of to-day sometimes could not even talk English.

If, according to the curriculum of Free Grammar Schools in his boyhood, little George Farquhar in Derry, in his

third form at the age of nine, had got his Aesop, he had learnt those fables to some purpose.

As Aesop, he continued in his discourse, would improve men by the policy of beasts, so dramatists at present tried to reform brutes with the examples of men. To Aesop, Farquhar then added the example of the Bible itself, both Testaments, their tales and parables, concluding that by authority of pagan, Jew, and Christian alike, as well as by modern instance, the world was schooled into better manners. But the audience under consideration was neither Greek nor Roman, neither French nor Spanish: the design was an English play for an English audience. Here was a country different in situation, in temperament, in constitution of the body politic, with an unaccountable medley of humours which produced a variety of follies, not all of them known to former ages, and therefore needing new remedies, that is, new counsels.

If the space of an hour created two extremes of temper in the same person – as often happened amongst these same English – what sort of plot must be drawn to engage the attention of so many different humours as were to be found in a whole audience? The wit, the courtier, the citizen, the fine lady and her fine footman – must they not all be diverted? Whoever did that best, wrote the best comedy, ‘so it were’, concluded Farquhar, with a delayed bow to Jeremy Collier, ‘not offensive to religion and good manners’. Wherein, then, lay the secret of diverting pit, box, and galleries? To determine a suit at law, one did not delve into archives of Greece or Rome, but into English law, into acts of Parliament. Accordingly, not Menander nor Plautus, but Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Fletcher, were the models. What cared they for the unities of time and place? ‘I would willingly understand,’ Farquhar submitted, ‘the regularities of Hamlet, Macbeth, Harry the Fourth, and of Fletcher’s plays . . . the darlings of the English audience’.

What, then, were the irregularities that mattered, in a play? Farquhar – who would never exclude a dash of prancing humour from anything he wrote – finished his critique by describing first the kind of person who wrote the bad play, and second, what was wrong with the play that person

wrote. 'There are a sort of gentlemen,' he began (almost like Shakespeare's Gratiano, 'whose visages do cream and mantle like a standing pond') 'gentlemen that have had the jaunty education of dancing, French, and a fiddle, who coming to age before they arrive at years of discretion, make a shift to spend a handsome patrimony of two or three thousand pound, by soaking in the taverns all night, lolling abed all the morning, and sauntering away all the evening between the two play-houses with their hands in their pockets; you shall have a gentleman, of this size, upon his knowledge of Covent Garden and a knack of witticising in his cups, set up immediately for a playwright.' What did this fellow say of himself as an author? 'My own intrigues are sufficient to found the plot, and the Devil's in't if I can't make my character talk as wittily as those in the *Trip to the Jubilee*.'

And this was the play which emerged: 'Act I. Scene, Covent Garden. Enter Portico, Piazza, and Turnstile. . . . Portico, being a compound of practical rake and speculative gentleman is ten to one the author's own character, and the leading card in the pack. Piazza is his mistress, who lives in the square, and is the daughter to old Pillariso, an odd out-of-the-way gentleman, something between the character of Alexander the Great and Solon, which must please, because it is new. Turnstile is maid and confidante to Piazza, who for a bribe of ten pieces lets Portico in at the back door; so the first act concludes. In the second, enter Spigotoso, who was butler perhaps to the Czar of Muscovy, and Fossetana his wife. After these characters are run dry, he brings you in at the third act, Whinewell and Charmarillis, for a scene of love to please the ladies; and so he goes on without fear or wit, till he comes to a marriage or two, and then he writes - Finis.'

For all the unity of time and place perhaps here preserved, added Farquhar, the person of even the meanest understanding in the whole audience would say, 'I don't like it'. No doubt he would be unable to explain why. Farquhar in conclusion gave the reasons: no part of the plot had any dependence upon another, and the characters were so incoherent and absurd that a beholder could within his knowledge of nature

DRURY LANE AGAIN

find no parallel to them. He would be 'unacquainted with any folly they reprov'd, or any virtue that they recommended', and their business was as flat and tiresome to him as if the actors had talked Arabic. Nevertheless, the opinion of such an insignificant observer in the audience was perhaps worth more than the opinion of the most learned critic, for if the play did please that simple individual, the chances were that 'five hundred saucy people' would come to a performance of it and from six to nine o'clock sit quite contented forty or fifty times a year, whatever faults in it the critics and scholars had stormed about.

It was pleasant so to write, so to speak with authority, so to remind his public of the record of his own play, *A Trip to the Jubilee*, whose value as entertainment the saucy people, the simple individuals, the insignificant observers in the audience had so long confirmed. But the 'six to nine o'clock' which Farquhar was now anxious to fill afresh, with his new comedy recounting the further adventures of Sir Harry Wildair, seemed as tardy of fruition as if nipped by a spring frost. Not until May 1 was it billed to open at Drury Lane. Whereas the interval between the opening of *Love and a Bottle* and the *Jubilee* had been only a year, that between the *Jubilee* and *Sir Harry Wildair* had lengthened to seventeen months. George Farquhar, a young man without resources, without family connections, without sinecures from the Government, a young man who on a holiday abroad had spent all he got from his last play, stood in need of more funds, quickly, than even a good sale of the *Discourse upon Comedy* would bring him.

In an attempt to catch the renewed favour of the 'saucy people' he let be spoken in his prologue to the new play some of the same conciliating views that he had already emphasized in the *Discourse*. 'Our youthful author,' the prologue asserted, cared not a pin for Vossius, Scaliger, Hedelin, or Rapin; his only rules were the personal measurements of those who came to the theatre. From the beaux he drew his formality; from the footmen, his morality; from the front boxes, his style; from the pit, his sense of the drama; and from the faces of the critics, his modern meaning of the unities. The playwright gained his ends, indeed, if only the

beaux of St. James's and the rakes of Covent Garden 'took his light fancy'.

If sparkle of dialogue alone could make a play, there was no reason why *Sir Harry Wildair*, as a continuation of the *Jubilee*, should not have been for Farquhar a hit as decided as Part II of *Henry IV* was for Shakespeare. But the plot was thin, incredible. It had a double thread, which consisted merely of Standard trying to preserve the fidelity of Lurewell, and of Angelica endeavouring the same for Wildair. Consonant with Farquhar's leaning away from Restoration naughtiness, and toward the propriety which Jeremy Collier demanded, both threads unwound acceptably. On the side of Angelica, however, the means to her end were weak. Though reported to have died, she came back – a female Lazarus embellished – disguised as a youth, and followed her husband about, whilst Wildair, thinking himself a widower, went for Lurewell, who had relapsed into her old petulance and her old flirtations.

In a typical scene between Wildair and Lurewell, Farquhar gave indicative personal expression to his own views on matrimony – a subject which seemed to engross him at the moment – views developing a perfect brief description of the ideal married life. This dialogue would in the heyday of Wycherley and Congreve have fallen upon less attentive ears in the pit:

LURE: And did matrimony please you extremely?

WILD: So very much that if polygamy were allowed I would have a new wife every day.

LURE: Oh, Sir Harry! This is raillery. But your serious thoughts upon the matter, pray.

WILD: Why then, Madam, to give you my true sentiments of wedlock: I had a lady that I married by chance; she was virtuous by chance; and I loved her by great chance. Nature gave her beauty, education an air, and fortune threw a young fellow of five and twenty in her lap. – I courted her all day, loved her all night; she was my mistress one day, my wife another. I found in one the variety of a thousand, and the very confinement of marriage gave me the pleasure of change.

DRURY LANE AGAIN

LURE: And she was very virtuous?

WILD: Look ye, Madam, you know she was beautiful. She had good nature about her mouth, the smile of beauty in her cheeks, sparkling wit in her forehead, and sprightly love in her eyes.

LURE: Pshaw! I knew her very well; the woman was well enough. But you don't answer my question, sir.

WILD: So, Madam, as I told you before, she was young and beautiful. I was rich and vigorous. My estate gave a lustre to my love, and a swing to our enjoyment. Round, like the ring that made us one, our golden pleasures circled without end.

LURE: Golden pleasures! Golden fiddlesticks. – What d'ye tell me of your canting stuff? Was she virtuous, I say?

WILD (*aside*): Ready to burst with envy; but I will torment thee a little. – So, madam, I powdered to please her; she dressed to engage me. We toyed away the morning with amorous nonsense, lolled away the evening in the Park or the playhouse, and all the night – Hem! –

LURE: Look ye, sir, answer my question, or I shall take it ill.

WILD: Then, Madam, there was never such a pattern of unity. – Her wants were still prevented by my supplies. My own heart whispered me her desires, 'cause she herself was there. No contention ever rose, but the dear strife of who should most oblige; no noise about authority, for neither would stop to command, 'cause both thought it glory to obey.

LURE: Stuff! stuff! stuff! – I won't believe a word on't.

WILD: Ha, ha, ha. Then, madam, we never felt the yoke of matrimony, because our inclinations made us one, a power superior to the forms of wedlock. The marriage-torch had lost its weaker light in the bright flame of mutual love that joined our hearts before. Then –

LURE: Hold, hold, sir. I cannot bear it. Sir Harry, I'm affronted.

WILD: Ha, ha, ha. Affronted!

LURE: Yes, sir. 'Tis an affront to any woman to hear another commended, and I will resent it. – In short, Sir Harry, your wife was a –

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

WILD: But, madam – no detraction. – I'll tell you what she was – so much an angel in her conduct that though I saw another in her arms I should have thought the devil raised the phantom, and my more conscious reason had given my eyes the lie.

If it were not that Lurewell was here revived as a sort of female libertine, the 'insignificant observers and simple individuals' in the audience might have feared that reform in this month of May had tumbled like a freshet into Drury Lane. But Lady Lurewell came on in scenes with as many as four amorous admirers. These affairs culminated in the discovery by Standard of Wildair, Clincher, and the new character of Marquis all in Lurewell's room at once, a situation hardly at variance with French farce.

Improbably, until the last act, Angelica remained disguised, as one Beau Banter. There had been Leathe in *Love and a Bottle*, Smuggler in the *Jubilee*, and now Angelica. Farquhar, it seemed, always had to disguise somebody. Though the tradition came down from so distinguished a prototype as Shakespeare's Viola, disguise was not a very persuasive device either in 1601 or in 1701, and *Sir Harry Wildair*, lacking invention in other scenes to counter-balance, did not appear to surmount this handicap. Even Colley Cibber, added to Farquhar's list of players as the swindling refugee Frenchman, failed for all his affectation of accent to contribute sufficient humour to sustain the piece; yet, as the foremost comic character of the day, perhaps better known as Foppington than as Cibber, this man was for Farquhar an inspiring recruit. But not Wilks as Wildair, nor Mills as Standard, neither Pinkey as Clincher nor Norris again as Jubilee Dicky, nor Mrs. Verbruggen and Mrs. Rogers repeating their popular creations of Lurewell and Angelica – not all these together were in any sense able to duplicate the success which they had won in the *Jubilee*.

At the same time, certain original and amusing bits in *Wildair* were well received. Toward the end, when Angelica, almost despairing as Beau Banter to save her husband from a somewhat stale Lurewell, came on as the ghost of her supposedly dead self, Wildair by no means played an agonized Hamlet:

DRURY LANE AGAIN

WILD: The devil it is! – Emh! Blood, I'll speak to't. – Vous, Mademoiselle Ghost, parlez-vous Francais? – No! Hark ye, Mrs. Ghost, will your Ladyship be pleased to inform us who you are, that we may pay the respect due your quality?

ANGE: I am the spirit of thy departed wife.

WILD: Are you, faith? Why then, here's the body of thy living husband, and stand to me if you dare. (*Runs to her and embraces her.*) Ha! 'tis substance, I'm sure. But hold, Lady Ghost, stand off a little, and tell me in good earnest now, whether you are alive or dead?

ANGE (*throwing off her shroud*): Alive! alive! (*runs and throws her arms about his neck*) and never lived so much as in this moment.

WILD: What d'ye think of the ghost now, Colonel? (*Angelica hangs upon him.*) Is it not a very loving shost?

STAN: Amazement!

WILD: Ay, 'tis amazement truly. – Look ye, Madam; I hate to converse so familiarly with spirits; pray keep your distance.

ANGE: I am alive; indeed I am.

WILD: I don't believe a word on't.

STAN: Sir Harry, you're more afraid now than before.

WILD: Ay, most men are more afraid of a living wife than a dead one.

Unlike the inscrutable case of Shakespeare, there is enough known of Farquhar's personal life to affirm that at least one character in each of his plays was himself – as Wildair here – also to affirm that a given play did to some considerable extent reflect his own state of mind at the time he wrote it. He was an autobiographical author, though none the less important for that. In the winter just past, 1700–1, he was upon his return from Holland and for some months thereafter rather glum because of the faithlessness he had met with in women. Infidelity in himself was no excuse for them; he did not expect to be repaid in kind. Farquhar, rake, beau, wastrel that he was, would really like to marry if only he could find the woman who measured up to his requirements. In accord with his present aspiration, also in keeping with the tendency of the times, he ended the play *Sir Harry*

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Wildair in an almost virtuous dialogue between Standard, Angelica, Lurewell, and Wildair himself:

STAN: Now, Sir Harry, we have retrieved our wives, yours from death and mine from the devil, and they are at present very honest. But how shall we keep 'em so?

ANGE: By being good husbands, sir; and the great secret for keeping matters right in wedlock is never to quarrel with your wives for trifles. For we are but babies at best, and must have our playthings, our longings, our vapours, our frights, our monkeys, our china, our fashions, our washes, our patches, our waters, our tattle, and impertinence. Therefore I say 'tis better to let a woman play the fool than provoke her to play the devil.

LURE: And another rule, gentlemen, let me advise you to observe: never to be jealous, or if you should, be sure never to let your wife think you suspect her. For we are more restrained by the scandal of the lewdness than by the wickedness of the fact, and once a woman has borne the shame of a whore, she'll despatch you the sin in a moment.

WILD: We're obliged to you, ladies, for your advice, and in return, give me leave to give you the definition of a good wife, in the character of my own. The wit of her conversation never outstrips the conduct of her behaviour. She's affable to all men, free with no man, and only kind to me. Often cheerful, sometimes gay, and always pleased, but when I am angry; then sorry, not sullen. The Park, playhouse, and cards, she frequents in compliance with custom. But her diversions of inclination are at home. She's more cautious of a remarkable woman than of a noted wit, well knowing that the infection of her own sex is more catching than the temptation of ours. To all this, she is beautiful to a wonder, scorns all devices that engage a gallant, and uses all arts to please her husband.

'So, spite of satire 'gainst a married life,
A man is truly blest with such a wife.'

If, at the turn of the century, sentimentalism on the stage was encroaching upon bawdry, wives upon mistresses, restraint upon looseness, perhaps the audience was not yet quite ready to let such a comedy sweep away all their memories of the Restoration. *Sir Harry Wildair*, like its author's first play, *Love and a Bottle*, ran for nine nights only, but for a different reason: aimed to conciliate the followers of Jeremy Collier (whereas *Love and a Bottle* had been flung in their teeth) the Wildair sequel lacked sufficient strength, likelihood, and novelty of action to lure the masses to Drury Lane. While its benefit performances provided Farquhar with relief sorely needed, he had with no little celerity been turning his energies to still other means of income.

On the opening day of his play, May 1, with public interest focussed on the name of Farquhar, appeared two volumes with which he was also identified. The first was a third edition of *Familiar and Courtly Letters*, five of them from the pen of Farquhar; the other was a book quite new, *A Pacquet from Will's*, wherein Farquhar figured more extensively: it contained about twenty letters either by or to him, and of these he signed his own name to two, 'Wildair' to another, and his pseudonym 'Celadon' to eleven more. As 'Celadon', Farquhar published a portion of his correspondence with Susanna Carroll, together with her answers; but as Celadon as well he added a series of seven letters to his mistress Celia – the vexatious one who kept him waiting over a dinner of oysters, chicken, and fricassee of rabbit.

If publication of these letters synchronous with the first night of *Sir Harry Wildair* was premeditated, the difficulties and delays which Farquhar encountered in bringing his newest play onto the stage were now confirmed. Twice earlier, on March 13 and on April 15, *A Pacquet from Will's* was advertised for immediate issue, and twice it was postponed. When it finally did appear, no doubt the letters added some public notice to the play, just as the play drew attention to the letters. But neither earned as much for Farquhar as he had hoped; the reception of the play itself was faint, and fewer people than he possibly supposed cared to read of his affairs with either Susanna or Celia. Not that

he drew 'royalties'; the letters simply failed to swell the audiences in the theatre.

When, within a fortnight after *Sir Harry Wildair* opened, the play came out as a booklet, on May 13, dedicated as planned in Holland to the youngish Earl of Albemarle, all that could at the moment be usefully done for the name of Farquhar was fulfilled. The author said he 'paid more homage to Albemarle's worth than adoration to his greatness'. The adoring, in fact, interlarded in the same dedication, Farquhar reserved for the King, and when he came to draw his parallel of Augustus, Maecenas, and Virgil, with William III, Albemarle, and himself, the dramatist was careful to disclaim for George Farquhar any merit comparable to that of the ancient poet. At the same time he begged Albemarle that 'the encouragement of Arts and Literature may not be solely excluded from the influence of your favour'.

All this was tactful, but not immediately fruitful; the most the dedication accomplished was to set Farquhar, in the minds of public high and low, within the radiance of royalty. He took advantage of his momentary ascendance by disposing of still more of the love letters engendered by his popularity after the run of *A Trip to the Jubilee*. Abel Boyer, the man who had figured in Farquhar's adventures with Susanna Carroll, was editing a book to be called *Letters of Wit, Politicks, and Morality, by Cardinal Bentivoglio*, Boyer himself having failed as a dramatist. To him Farquhar turned over another twenty letters, which he had either written or received by way of his further relations with Mrs. Carroll. Susanna herself seems to have played a willing part in Boyer's scheme, for several of the letters were those (involving Farquhar) which passed between her and the young girl Chloe. In addition, Boyer put in four epistles in verse, including Susanna's poem to Farquhar on *A Trip to the Jubilee*, two of her love effusions to him, and Jane Wiseman's long rhyme upon his faithlessness. This volume appeared on July 22.

In the same month Farquhar made arrangements with Bernard Lintot, the publisher, to bring out all the rest of his miscellaneous prose and verse, and, Sam Briscoe having not altogether emerged from the difficulties of bankruptcy, these

works were to include not only the *Discourse upon Comedy*, lately addressed to Briscoe, but Farquhar's letters to him from Holland. The title of this book (when and if published) was to be *Love and Business*. In connection with it, Lintot in July paid Farquhar £3 4s. 6d., an initial sum perhaps not too low when the author was receiving a minimum of £15 for the manuscript of a play. Of Lintot, a yeoman from Horsham, better things were said than of most publishers of the time. Although Pope called him 'stout and clumsy', Swift's couplet about him ran:

'His character's beyond compare,
Like his own person, large and fair.'

Yet George Farquhar was not making his way in literature unassailed by enemies. Whatever the fate of his latest play, there were those who begrudged him the record-breaking run of his comedy of the *Jubilee*. In this year appeared under anonymous editorship a compilation called *Poems on Affairs of State*. The verses in it attacked, among other things, an operatic version of Fletcher's *Island Princess*, adapted by Peter Motteux, a Frenchman who like Abel Boyer had come to England after the Revocation. Under the heading *The Grove; or The Rival Muses*, this particular diatribe skidded from Motteux to Farquhar:

'Motteux and Dufey are for nothing fit
But to supply with songs their want of wit.
Had not the Island Princess been adorned
With tunes and pompous scenes she had been scorned.
What was not Fletcher's no more sense contains
Than he that wrote the *Jubilee* has brains,
Which ne'er had pleased the town, or purchased fame,
But that 'twas christened with a modish name.'

As young Farquhar had said in his preface to the *Jubilee*, he was below the envy of great wits. That was still true. What was no longer true was that he was not now 'above the malice of little ones'. To them it was equally open to write a play which they were at liberty to christen with a modish name. All Farquhar needed to ask them, if he cared to bother, was why they had not done it. Still, even with his achievement of three plays, all of which had returned him double benefit performances or more, he took adverse

criticism rather hard, and he sensed that his career was likely to meet with sterner opposition than his major compeers had had to face.

In literature, however, he was at the moment aware of no weakening; such pessimism as he did give way to was restricted to affairs of the heart. His latest attachment, the lady with whom he was corresponding whilst he was fighting rheumatism in Richmond, and whom he would have married without more ado, in this year cast him off. 'Tis a sad misfortune,' Farquhar took his leave of her, 'to begin a letter with an adieu. But when my love is crossed, 'tis no wonder that my writing should be reversed. I would beg your pardon for the other offences of this nature which I have committed, but that I have so little reason to judge favourably of your mercy; though I can assure you, Madam, that I shall never excuse myself my own share of the trouble, no more than I can pardon myself the vanity of attempting your charms, so much above the reach of my pretensions, and which are reserved for some more worthy admirers. If there be that man upon earth that can merit your esteem, I pity him; for an obligation too great for a return must to any generous soul be very uneasy, though still I envy his misery. May you be as happy, Madam, in the enjoyment of your desires as I am miserable in the disappointment of mine; and as the greatest blessing of your life, may the person you admire love you as sincerely, and as passionately, as he whom you scorn.'

Here was bitterness, and yet, appreciation of his escape from the task which the haughty lady's husband would have to shoulder if he fulfilled her high-flown demands. Even the great Dryden had often had to run off to Will's, to get away from his frozen-faced wife who was always reminding herself of her nobility. But the grim truth seemed in Farquhar's case to be that the elusive object of his intentions was a woman of means. She could have relieved him from the prospect of want, a surety which his writings, his acquaintance, his connections, had in any sustained measure failed thus far to provide.

There was only one present course for George Farquhar to pursue. No later than September of this year, 1701, he set about writing another play.

D E S P E R A T E

Authorship

THE volume *Love and Business*, a collection of *Occasional Verse and Epistolary Prose*, which he aimed to publish just on the eve of producing his fourth play, Farquhar resolved to dedicate to his friend Edmond Chaloner, a man whose conversation he from time to time enjoyed hour on end. Chaloner was a book lover – but no pedant – and one who had blended his learning with travel in France and Italy. He was a generation older than Farquhar, and came of a celebrated family; unhappily, the father of Chaloner was a regicide, having died in prison in 1660. With due tact Farquhar sidestepped this contretemps. The dedication stressed the distinction of Chaloner's grandfather, Sir Thomas: trusted statesman, soldier, and minister to Queen Elizabeth.

Then Farquhar inserted a personal note to the Reader. The author of *Love and Business*, he said, was 'span new from top to toe, talked of everything but religion, admired himself very much, and his greatest ambition was to please the ladies'. He begged civility for the book from courtiers, wits, and critics. From men in the City he asked more than that, having now bound himself to one of them, Mr. Lintot the bookseller, and was expecting 'to serve seven years in his shop'. But above all he chanced his reception at the hands of the ladies, 'thinking it a greater honour to fall a sacrifice to the resentment of the fair than to live by the approbation of men. He really thought the ladies should moderate their possible censure of the book, since much of it 'was first designed for one of that sex' with no intent to publish, and was now 'brought from a lady's cabinet to the press'. The

lady was Penelope, with whom Farquhar had not corresponded for a year, and whose permission to print had seemed to come readily enough.

So desperately in need of money was the author that in the effort to make this book a sizable one, to give purchasers something ponderable for their investment, he swept into it nearly every manuscript new or old that he could scrape up, and even reprinted a few pieces. He compiled it in haste, with neither method nor chronology. He went back to his school and college days, and included the epigram on the riding-house in Dublin, another epigram (on woman) in Latin, the long Pindaric on General Schomberg, also his undergraduate verses on the death of Queen Mary. He put in his poem to Mrs. Trotter, together with the poem written in Holland to his beloved in England, in which as 'Leander' he lamented that a stormy sea prevented his returning home to her. He added not only the verses to Sam Briscoe, about Sam's pocket being picked, but the two long letters to Sam from Holland, and as well the letter thence to his mistress, about the party in The Hague with the young noblemen. The highly amorous poem 'Lovers' Night', from *Adventures of Covent Garden*, he used again. Then came about twenty letters detailing Farquhar's escapades with various women in the previous year or two, the most notable being the half dozen written to Penelope. He finished off the book by coupling his 'Discourse upon Comedy' with a sketch of a scene in Covent Garden, wherein three characters discussed the unities – always a subject which bit Farquhar like a gadfly.

It is tantalizing to speculate whether Penelope, as well as Chloe, was Anne Oldfield. At all events, regarding his women readers, Anne was one of whom Farquhar needed entertain no fear about her reception of that portion of his book, at least, which contained the 'Discourse upon Comedy'. Mrs. Oldfield, having read the 'Discourse', declared that of all the many apologies for the stage, she preferred the humorous one (the fourth paragraph) therein given: 'Poetry alone, and chiefly the drama, lies open to the insults of all pretenders; she was one of Nature's eldest offsprings, whence by her birthright and plain simplicity she pleads a genuine likeness

to her mother. Born in the innocence of time, she provided not against the assaults of succeeding ages; and, depending altogether on the generous end of her invention, neglected those secret supports and serpentine devices used by other arts that wind themselves into practice for more subtle and politic designs: Naked she came into the world, and 'tis to be feared, like its professors, will go naked out'.

However, apart from all this, the most arresting thing in *Love and Business* was a description which Farquhar inserted of himself, as he actually was in the year 1701 at the age of twenty-four, a rising dramatist, burgeoning into his powers, still carried along by the creative literary momentum of the day, himself unwittingly the last exemplar of Restoration comedy. A lady whom he favoured had asked him for his picture. Farquhar replied by *writing* it, and he challenged 'Van Dyke or Kneller to draw more to the life'. He hoped its colours would never fade, even though the lady should give him 'some hints where to mend the features, having so much power to correct the life'.

This likeness in writing Farquhar in fact called 'The Picture'. There were his body, and his mind. Of the body, it was 'qualified to answer all the ends of its creation', and that was sufficient. His mind was generally drest like his person, in black, for its everyday apparel was melancholy. He was splenetic, yet amorous; vigilant in restraining both failings, he was by men called easy-natured, and by women an ill-natured clown. He was cautious of promising constancy, for, like health, it depended upon a certain constitution; this certainty might alter both in degree and in frequency.

So great an epicure, Farquhar continued, was he that he hated pleasure bought by too much pain. Long anticipation of pleasure reduced its blessing, because familiarity with the idea of the pleasure abolished the transport of surprise; springs of desire, long upon the rack, grew loose and enervated. If anyone of a creative fancy brooded too long upon an object, his swollen hopes ended in a disappointment.

He was seldom troubled with what the world called airs and caprices. It was an idiot's excuse for a foolish action to say it was 'his humour'. He hated to vex people for trifles, to

tease them with malicious lies, or frightful stories; he stole no lap dogs, tore no fans, broke no china. If ever he did a wilful injury, it must be a great one. If he was often melancholy, he was seldom angry, and he could be severe in his resentment without injuring himself. Why should he make himself uneasy for what another should be punished? He was easily deceived, but always at last found out the cheat. Loving pleasure and sedateness, he was very secure, and when alarmed, very diligent.

With so natural a propensity to ease, he could cheerfully fix to no study unless it carried pleasure with it. This inclined him to poetry above all else. He had very little estate except what lay under the circumference of his hat. But by three hours of study (he wrote for three hours a day) he could live for the other twenty-one with satisfaction, and contribute to the maintenance of more families (those of the staff and cast at the theatre) than some who have thousands a year.

He had something in his outward behaviour that gave strangers a worse opinion of him than he deserved; but he was the more recompensed by the opinion of his acquaintance, which was as much above his desert. He had many acquaintance, very few intimates, but no friend – in the old romantic way. He had no secrets so weighty but what he could bear in his own breast; no duels to fight but what he could engage in without a second; nor could he love after the old romantic discipline. He would have his passion waited on by his reason. Finally, the greatest proof of his affection that a lady must expect was this: he would run any hazard to make both himself and her happy, but would not for any transitory pleasure make either miserable.

So George Farquhar familiarized London with an analysis of himself. Whatever London should think of *Love and Business*, with its honest confession, its verses boyish and mature, its biographical revelations, its comments on the Dutch, and its unashamed letters of love and seduction – even a song to ‘Aurelia’, the name of a character played by Anne Oldfield during the previous season in *The Perjured Husband*, by Susanna Carroll – whether London received this book of Farquhar’s generously or meagrely, its author

managed to get through the winter in which he spun out his own next play.

This comedy was one whose theme divulged the thoughts that had long engrossed him, from his *Jubilee* success even up to his sketch of himself in 'The Picture'. Farquhar entitled his new play *The Inconstant*. But it was not wholly his own. Being in a hurry because of his shortage of funds, he decided to adapt an old play rather than create a fresh one entire. In this device he was following the path of his friend Vanbrugh, who in 1700 had taken *The Pilgrim* from John Fletcher. Thus Farquhar pitched upon Fletcher's *Wild Goose Chase*; it happened to fit the theme of his interest. Unfortunately the adaptation proved more time-consuming than original work; he had barely finished it by the first of February, 1702, the day, as he himself made note, on which Prince Eugene took prisoner the Duc de Villeroi at Cremona. As the play turned out, of the sixteen scenes in *The Inconstant*, seven were wholly Farquhar's, and three more he so far redrafted that Fletcher himself would have barely recognized them.

The chief task was to modernize Fletcher, to add vivacity, to expand the good humour, to turn Fletcher's blank verse into the swinging prose dialogue of the day. In the course of this tinkering Farquhar reshuffled the characters, omitted needless or dull ones, combined others – such as Fletcher's Rosalura and Lillia Bianca into Bizarre, 'a whimsical lady', and Pinac and Belleur into Captain Duretete, 'an honest good-natured fellow that thinks himself a greater fool than he is', and above all, La Castre and Nantolet into Old Mirabel, decidedly a character more crisp and clear-cut than either of his components. Finally Farquhar did heighten the comedy, not only by introducing a scene of his own in a monastery, but by substituting a new last act. This Act V fell in with the sentimental fashion of the day, as fostered by Dick Steele, and submerged manners with melodrama. It was a risky experiment as well as a curiosity, and Farquhar based it upon an imported source, an actual adventure of Pierre Joulet, Chevalier de Chastillon, first Gentleman of the Chamber in the French Court. This narrative Chastillon had put into a little vellum-bound book, *Les Amours d'Ar-*

mide, which had been popular in the boudoirs of London since the time of James I.

But what conspicuously attracted Farquhar to the *Wild Goose Chase* was the character of Young Mirabel, 'Bob', in whom he saw partly himself, like Wildair, like Roebuck, a character also admirably fit for 'Bob' Wilks to play. Farquhar so arranged his cast that he had two pairs of chiasitic lovers: bold Young Mirabel and bashful Oriana set off by bashful Duretete and bold Bizarre. This situation he embroidered by Dugard, brother to Oriana, and solicitous on her behalf like Laertes to Ophelia. The friendship between Young Mirabel and Duretete, in its turn, was as close as between Damon and Pythias, in what Farquhar called 'the old romantic way'. Old Mirabel was the elderly comic perpetually anxious to get his impudent and vexing son married; whether to Oriana or to Bizarre he cared not so much; but he at length fixed upon Oriana. The action of the play hinged upon Oriana's successive schemes to catch Young Mirabel – rather like Shakespeare's Helena in pursuit of Bertram – this affair being supplemented by the farcical but growing attachment of Duretete for Bizarre.

It was a situation after Farquhar's own heart that when the betrothed Oriana tried to make Young Mirabel fulfil his marriage contract he exclaimed that he only wanted to make her his mistress. He was a Wycherley hero. 'Why,' Bob asked Oriana, 'do you sit three or four hours at your toilet in a morning? Only with a villainous design to make some poor fellow a fool before night. What are your languishing looks, your studied airs and affectations, but so many baits and devices to delude men out of their dear liberty and freedom? What d'ee sigh for, and what d'ee weep for, what d'ee pray for? Why, for a husband: that is, you implore Providence to assist you in the just and pious design of making the wisest of his creatures a fool, and the head of creation a slave.' This was in Act I, and as late as Act IV Young Mirabel was still going on about it, this time to his father: 'Would my father have his youthful son lie lazing here, bound to a wife, chained like a monkey to make sport to a woman, subject to her whims, humours, longings, vapours, and caprices, to have her one day pleased, tomorrow peevish, the next day

mad, the fourth rebellious, and nothing but this succession of impertinence for ages together? . . . you would compel me to that state which I have heard you curse yourself, when my mother and you have battled it for a whole week together.'

All this was very much of a piece with Farquhar's own wariness at this stage in his relations with women. While it is true that as winter inched toward spring he wrote *The Inconstant* into a happy ending, he took care in a series of ascending episodes to make Oriana prove herself, and to see that Young Mirabel discounted his father's advocacy and complicity. It did not work, for example, when Old Mirabel disguised himself as a Spanish grandee, and pretended to make off with Oriana; Young Mirabel detected the ruse. Then Oriana pretended to be a nun; Bob discovered the sham, and repudiated her. She feigned madness, and when on rousing his compassion she told him she was pretending, he cast her off again. Only in the last act, when Farquhar, originally, introduced Lamorce, 'a woman of contrivance', who lured the amorous Young Mirabel to her house and then called in desperadoes to kill him, whereupon Oriana disguised as a page fetched other big men to the rescue, did Young Mirabel capitulate. He was more like Shakespeare's Bertram than Farquhar's own Wildair, just as Leante in *Love and a Bottle* recalled Helena, Bertram's betrothed.

Of this incident Elizabeth Inchbald, when a century later (1806) she came to edit her long shelf of books called 'British Theatre', asserted in her introduction to *The Inconstant*: 'The Chevalier de Chastillon was the man who is personated by Young Mirabel, in this extraordinary event (Act V), and the Chevalier's friend, his betrothed wife, and his beautiful courtesan are all exactly described in the characters of Duretete, Oriana and Lamorce.'

But it was in the character of Bizarre, pretending to be a dancing romping hoyden, that Farquhar really drew away from the usual, departed from Fletcher himself, and for contrast used his own sense of high comedy. As Oriana in the end won Mirabel by her steadfastness, Bizarre won Duretete by at first plaguing him. As he came in, she cried out to her maid, 'Pshaw, hang books; they sour our temper, spoil our

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

eyes, and ruin our complexions'. Throwing away her book, she called in a fiddler, and seeing Duretete:

BIS: Come, sir, don't be ashamed; that's my good boy – you're very welcome; we wanted such a one – Come, strike up – I know you dance well, sir; you're perfectly shaped for't – Come, come, sir, quick, quick, you miss the time else.

DUR: But madam, I come to talk with you.

BIS: Ay, ay, talk as you dance, talk as you dance, come.

DUR: But we were talking of dialectics.

BIS: Hang dialectics – mind the time – quicker, sirrah (*to the fiddler*). Come, and how d'e find yourself now, sir?

DUR: In a fine breathing sweat, Doctor.

BIS: All the better, patient, all the better; come, sir, sing now, sing; I know you sing well. I see you have a singing face, a heavy dull sonato face.

DUR: Who, I, sing?

BIS: O, you're modest, sir – but come, sit down, closer, closer. Here, a bottle of wine – come sir, fa, la, la, sing, sir.

DUR: But madam, I came to talk with you.

BIS: O sir, you shall drink first. Come, fill me a bumper – here, sir, bless the King.

DUR: Would I were out of his Dominions – by this light, she'll make me drunk, too.

BIS: O, pardon me, sir, you shall do me right; fill it higher – now, sir, can you drink a health under your leg? . . . You see how a woman's fancy varies, sometimes splenetic and heavy, then gay and frolicsome. . . .

DUR: Madam, I came to wait upon you with a more serious intention than your entertainment has answered.

BIS: Sir, your intention of waiting on me was the greatest affront imaginable . . . a prologue to a very scurvy play, of which Mr. Mirabel and you so handsomely laid the plot. . . . Ads my life, sir, I have a great mind to kick you – go, go to your fellow rake now, rail at my sex, and get drunk for vexation, and write a lampoon . . . my reputation is above the scandal of a libel, my virtue is sufficiently approved to those whose opinion is my interest, and for the rest let them talk what they

DESPERATE AUTHORSHIP

will, for when I please I'll be what I please, in spite of you and all mankind, and so dear man of honour, if you be tired, con over this lesson, and sit there till I come to you. (*Runs off.*)

Here was a diverting offset to the affair between Mirabel and Oriana, a fresh and ingenious counterfoil, with the whims of the sexes in this couple reversed. Anyone reading *The Inconstant*, all in all, as Farquhar finished it and by February put it into the hands of Christopher Rich, could see that this was a play which bore the fibre of a success. As Farquhar himself was 'a beautiful reader of his own plays', he met with no difficulty in so persuading Rich.

Skilful carpentry had reduced the number of Fletcher's characters from twelve to eight, all of which refashioned parts except the new and minor one of Lamorce were to be taken by actors who had appeared in earlier plays from Farquhar: Pinkethman as Old Mirabel, Wilks as his son, Bullock as Duretete, Mills as Dugard, Norris as Dugard's servant Petit (a part not in Fletcher), Mrs. Rogers as Oriana, and the beloved Mrs. Verbruggen as Bizarre. Moreover Farquhar in spite of himself was yielding considerably to Jeremy Collier, and making this play 'decent' to a degree of morality he had not hitherto bothered about. The new flavour had been stirred in to the drama in the previous autumn, when Captain Steele, with his comedy *The Funeral*, had exhorted the town to sentiment. So in *The Inconstant*, when Oriana, drest as a boy, followed her lover into the house of Lamorce and saved him from being killed, Farquhar was simply writing up to date, though in so doing he made his action improbable if not inconsistent.

Unluckily Rich chose to open the new play in the beginning of March (only a week after *Love and Business* was published), a time which in 1702 happened to run dangerously near to the beginning of Lent, during part of which season the theatres closed. But the needy Farquhar agreed to go on with it. The prologue was the work of Peter Motteux, the loquacious French refugee and playwright, whose comedy *Beauty in Distress* had failed, according to Farquhar, because 'it had only one scene in it'. Motteux, in his invocation to *The Inconstant*, compared a play to the

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

courses of a supper; but he was a bit too apologetic:

'Satire's the sauce, high-seasoned, sharp, and rough:
Kind masques and beaux, I hope you're pepper-proof . . .
But comedy, that, that's the darling cheer,
This night we hope you'll an Inconstant bear . . .
Yet since each mind betrays a different taste,
And every dish scarce pleases every guest,
If ought you relish, do not damn the rest. . . .'

The great Bob Wilks, at least, was no disappointment as Young Mirabel. A discerning critic in the audience said Wilks 'out-acted himself' in the part which Farquhar called his 'darling character', who was 'a gay, splendid, generous, easy, fine young gentleman'. But the poor author was dismayed on this first night to see a dozen men stand up in the pit, make a great hubbub, and as if taking a hint from Motteux's impolitic lines, damn the play outright. Farquhar thought it hard that such creatures should choose to obliterate him, as if they would 'burn his house, or pick his pocket', rather than state specifically what it was in the play that they objected to, a play with which he had taken 'half a year's pains . . . for their entertainment'.

The Inconstant ran intermittently for six nights, allowing the author two third-night benefits for himself. Farquhar 'heard some people so extravagantly angry' at it, that 'one would think they had no reason to be displeased at all; others commended it so much that he was 'afraid they ridiculed him'. He did not lose faith in the play himself – and time eventually proved him right. He put down the closing of it to Lent, and hoped to revive the run thereafter. But, even if we ignore the booing of the rowdies in the pit, there were other reasons. Motteux had also referred in his prologue to the competition which all London theatres were suffering because of the invasion of Italian singers and French tumblers. There was high-salaried French opera as well, Motteux speaking of one Mlle. Soubigny as 'your French virgin-pullet garnished round, and drest with sauce of some 400-pound'. Farquhar was rather bitter about 'la Soubigny'. 'What can be a greater compliment,' he asked, 'to our generous nation, than to have the lady upon her *retour* to Paris boast of their splendid entertainment in England, of the complaisance, liberality, and good nature of a people,

that thronged her house so full that she had not room to stick a pin; and left a poor fellow that had the misfortune to be one of themselves, without a farthing. . . .’

But this operatic rivalry itself dwindled, and owing not entirely to Lent. Nor was it from all the causes mentioned that the reverses of Farquhar wholly arose. On March 8 died King William III, in Kensington Palace. His asthma, aggravated by dropsy, a combination of maladies all too common in this age, took a bad turn after a fall he had from his horse, and the totality of such ailments defeated this Dutch hero though hardly a man on the field of battle could. With the whole of London now cloaked in mourning there was not a wisp of a chance for a play by George Farquhar to prosper.

Still he lost no time in sending *The Inconstant* to the printer. The copy-money for it must provide enough to tide him on a little farther. In one respect of the contents of the book he departed from his usual practice: the dedication. Farquhar bore a grievance against his patrons, indeed against patronage in general. In his earlier plays he had honoured with dedications the Marquess of Carmarthen, Sir Roger Mostyn, and the Earl of Albemarle. What had they done for Farquhar? Nothing. Whilst in Holland he had even got convivial with Albemarle, the Earl, notwithstanding his suave acceptance of the dedication of *Sir Harry Wildair*, had promptly forgotten its author. High time it was, thought Farquhar when writing *The Inconstant*, to take a good dig at such persons. Early in Act III, in a scene in which Bizarre and Mirabel were striking sparks off each other, he had Bizarre say, ‘I come prepared to make you a panegyric, that shall mortify your pride like any Modern Dedication’. To which Mirabel retorted, ‘And I, Madam, like a true Modern Patron, shall hardly give you just thanks for your trouble’. This, alas, had been Farquhar’s own experience; he now forsook velvet acquaintance for home-spun friends.

His choice fell upon his old college-mate, Richard Tighe, the music-lover. They had been together through the whole of Farquhar’s time at Trinity; both had left the university in the spring of 1696, although Tighe, unlike Farquhar, had

taken his degree. More to the present point, Tighe had paid the author of *The Inconstant* the compliment of witnessing that play, and not once only, but on several of its half-dozen nights. Farquhar now wrote him a dedication which compared Tighe in every respect to Mirabel, 'abating his inconstancy'; that is, Richard Tighe himself was 'gay, generous, splendid, easy, and fine'. Tighe, too, was master of all pleasures but slave to none, and a traveller, not for curiosity, but for the improvement of the mind's eye. The author confessed that his own genius had a bent to that kind of description. 'Generosity and easiness of temper' in Tighe were obvious not only in his common affairs and conversation, but in his hobby of music, which lent harmony to all his actions. 'A person must be possessed of a very divine soul who is so much in love with the entertainment of angels.' Here was a dedication from the heart, for it may truly be said to have been paid for in advance.

Farquhar then subjoined a preface, in which he maintained that he had, like Prince Eugene at Cremona, neither lost nor won. He was merely 'proud to own that he had laid his head at the ladies' feet'. He rehearsed his unhappy experience at the first night of the play, together with the awkward competition elsewhere from the foreign performers, and he added a few of the comments from critic friends pro and con. One bright spot was the sixth and final night of *The Inconstant*. A number of representatives from the New Theatre, the rival house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, came out in his support. 'To be friends,' Farquhar now observed, 'and revenged at the same time, I must give them a play, that is - when I write another.'

The book of *The Inconstant* appeared in the bookstalls within a fortnight of the first presentation of the play. If the receipts from his two benefits went for debts previously incurred, Farquhar had somehow to live upon what he obtained from the book, such as it was, until he could turn out another comedy that should prove more remunerative. His fortunes were now at their lowest. But what dramatist was doing any better, in this season of ashes and mourning?

In the following month, on April 14, there was published

anonymously a very curious pamphlet. It contained a scurrilous dialogue entitled 'A Comparison Between the Two Stages', meaning Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields. The speakers were two crabbed playgoers, Ramble and Sullen, and Chagrin, a critic. Practically every dramatist of any standing from Etherege down they dealt with by name, except Farquhar; him they merely called 'the one who wrote the *Trip to the Jubilee*.' Without question the writer, or writers, of this dialogue had both dramatic talent and experience, though perhaps tempered by some disappointment, and their comments are invaluable and unique in point of being a judgment written at that time. If warped, spiteful, and biased, as some of the remarks assuredly were, it is possible that this dialogue was so made with tongue in cheek, in order to arouse controversy, together with amusement. However, it seems then to have made little impression, for all its deliberately provocative nature.

This work was no hasty synthesis. The first in its series of repartees was evidently written whilst Farquhar was still enjoying the plaudits of London over his second play, the play that made him. The name of his character Lady Lurewell was already being applied not to herself alone, but to a species whom, in the view of Chagrin the Critic, she typified, as opposed to those represented by Angelica. Early in the dialogue the speakers, having descanted upon the actresses at Lincoln's Inn Fields, went for those in Drury Lane:

SULL: Well then, what think you of the Lurewells and Angelicas of t'other house?

CRIT: To my knowledge there are many Lurewells among 'em, but not one Angelica: many punks, but not one honest woman.

But it was after they had denounced both theatres in general, and taken a good vitriolic fling at the visiting eunuchs and other singers from the Continent, that these gentlemen got down to the native dramatists individually:

SULL: Nay, now you're too severe; what think you of Etherege, Dryden, Wycherley, Otway. Congreve and Vanbrugh?

CRIT: And what think you of D(enni)s, D(urfe)y, G(ildo)n, S(ettl)e, B(urnab)y, and who not? but above all,

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

commend me to the ingenious author of the Trip to the Jubilee.

RAMB: Oh Lord, Sir! you won't quarrel with that play; never anything did such wonders.

CRIT: Oh 'twas admirable! admirable! I wonder the town did not just then bespeak the bays for him.

SULL: Nay, for ought you and I know, he may live to enjoy 'em; I assure you all the run of the town is on his side. The owl was never more esteemed at Athens than the Trip to the Jubilee was here.

CRIT: Indeed I have known a footman have a great stroke with his Lord at begging a favour; if all the footmen in town that admire him (Farquhar) were to club for his preferment, I don't know what might be done.

RAMB: The footmen! Ay, and the middle gallery too I assure you are of his side, and that's a strong party.

CRIT: Why, I believe it; 'tis about the pitch of their understanding; but if ever it diverted one man of tolerable sense I'll be hanged.

SULL: I don't know who are your people of tolerable sense, Mr. Critick; but at that play I have seen the pit, box, and stage so crowded – and if that is not a sign –

CRIT: 'Tis no more a sign of their approbation than going to church is a sign of their devotion. There's (as Dryden calls it) a malicious sort of pleasure in laughing at a ridiculous thing: I have cracked my sides at a Bart'lemew merry-andrew, tho' at that very minute I knew him the most despicable rogue in nature. . . .

RAMB: Shall we enter into the merits of the play, and take it scene by scene?

CRIT: . . . I would as soon consent to be poisoned as to hear that play read; it would be as offensive to my nostrils as the turning up of a dunghill.

Then, not until the last scene in the 'Comparison', a scene in the Rose Tavern, did the talkers get back to Farquhar. Apparently a considerable interval of time had elapsed between the writing of the two sections, a much longer interval than the actual writing required. The speakers brought Farquhar up to date with a bang. Again they were talking of Drury Lane:

DESPERATE AUTHORSHIP

RAMB: Do you know what play is now in rehearsal in this house?

SULL: I never go near 'em; but I hear 'tis one of his who writ the Trip to the Jubilee.

CRIT: That's an indefatigable drudge at the stage. If he lives as long as Euripides did he will afford us as many plays. He is as constant every winter as rain and dirty weather.

RAMB: Pray, what is it?

SULL: I have not heard the name, but am told it's entirely Fletcher's.

RAMB: 'Tis a sign his Muse is at an ebb; but if he alters it, 'tis a thousand to one he spoils it. Which of Fletcher's, pray?

SULL: The Wild Goose Chase.

RAMB: But why that? I have seen it acted with good applause, and needed no alterations.

SULL: No matter for that; he vamps it up, and with some wretched interpolations of his own passes it for new. But I'll undertake to mark out his from Fletcher's as evidently as I can perceive the river Dee runs thro' the great lake in Wales. But now you put me in mind of him, did you hear of a book of his published this winter under the title of Love and Business?

CRIT: No, I never heard of it; is it of any account?

RAMB: If you have not heard of it, it can be of no great account, that's certain. . . .

SULL: There's folly enough in it for love; but what he means by business is not in my understanding, unless he very wittily turns the satire on himself, and by a forced synecdoche means it *an interruption* of business.

CRIT: I believe it will sooner prove an interruption than a pleasure.

SULL: Part of his prose consists of his love letters, another part of his trip into Holland, and the rest is a satire against Aristotle.

CRIT: How, a satire against Aristotle!

RAMB: A very curious confection! That a schoolboy of his years and capacity should enter into the lists with Aristotle! Amazing! Or that he should think his

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

insipid imaginary love letters an entertainment for ladies and men of sense!

SULL: No; to give him his due, I believe his ambition did not aspire so high: he has calculated this, as well as his plays, for the meridian of the galleries, and thinks himself well paid if they like it: I'll say that for him, he has so much humility as not to expect that persons of understanding should be of his side.

CRIT: But prithee, what does he say against Aristotle?

SULL: He plainly says he was an ass, and knew not half so much poetry as he knows. . . .

CRIT: . . . I'll hold you any odds this spark never read a line of Aristotle in his life, and I much question if he knows whether he writ in Greek or Latin.

SULL: If Fletcher had not the misfortune to be in English, he had escaped this highwayman.

The remarks on *The Inconstant* rather sound as if 'A Comparison' had been timed to appear in print coincident with the opening of that play. But since the pamphlet was published a full month later its writers may have waited to make sure that *The Inconstant* did not duplicate the success of the *Jubilee*. One is tempted to link those responsible for the 'Comparison' with that 'faction of a dozen' whom Farquhar denounced in the preface to his comedy, those gentlemen in the pit who would 'stab a single person . . . burn his house, or pick his pocket'. Yet the effect of the pamphlet, upon the whole, might easily have been to draw all the more public attention to the *Jubilee* and to *Love and Business*, if not to *The Inconstant*. However unfriendly the characters Rambler, Sullen, and Chagrin may have meant to be, they were obliged to grant one important thing: that Farquhar, the 'schoolboy', had captured the middle galleries. 'And,' observed Rambler, 'that's a strong party'.

CHAPTER XII

THE COMEDY OF

Exposure

WHEN Farquhar in 'The Picture' he drew of himself stressed his melancholy and the paucity of his friends and intimates, he by no means meant that he was a solitary. He also said he had 'many acquaintance'. That was the telling thing. Having begun to accumulate this acquaintance almost as soon as he arrived in London, he naturally found that his plays whether good or bad materially broadened it, and in Will's coffee-house he was now a familiar figure without being himself familiar. What was more, he knew how to make use of this acquaintance when the occasion arose. For very subsistence Farquhar in this summer of 1702 had to set to work upon still another new play. What should it be about?

Just round the corner from Will's, in the east side of Bow Street, lived a fellow-Hibernian, William Longueville, a barrister (and a fencing-master), aged sixty-three, who was treasurer of the Inner Temple. His colleague Roger North, of the Middle Temple, called Longueville 'fluent, witty, literate, copious, and instructive'. Some thought Longueville talked too much; but that was an Irishman's privilege. He was said to have attempted writing a comedy of his own, but to have failed. With this elderly compatriot Farquhar now had a talk about the next play by himself, a talk which drew from Longueville a hint that twin brothers, at odds over inherited property, might make the frame of a plot. Straightway Farquhar let his fancy play upon the idea; very soon, though not too rapidly, he was putting it into shape.

He found of course that in certain scenes he needed a lawyer for one of his characters; Longueville was just the man to help him with the 'nice quillets' essential in those

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

scenes, and did help him. Farquhar also conceived of an Irish man-servant for the elder brother. From his days at the university he fully knew the type and their brogue; but when he submitted his sketch of the character to Longueville, that gentleman was able to add some lines which resoundingly rounded it out.

So into the autumn Farquhar worked, upon the play which he chose to call *The Twin Rivals*, a play in which he would so far depart from the usual tenets of Restoration comedy as not only to expose the bawdiness and villainy of the day, but to wreak poetical justice upon its perpetrators. If this was again yielding to the sentimental lead which Steele had taken, if this was once more acknowledging that the detested Jeremy Collier was right, or that obeisance was due him at last, Farquhar still determined to take the risk against the popular appetite. He would at least put forth this belated recognition of the difference between right and wrong in a setting of humour, of realism, and of dialogue that was natural.

Meanwhile Colley Cibber also came on, in November, with a comedy, *She Would and She Would Not*, which he had adapted from the Spanish. It revealed a series of rollicking exploits of one Hippolita, disguised as a man, a character expertly enacted by the dependable Mrs. Verbruggen. Cibber was here not yet giving way to sentiment, but rather emphasizing intrigue. Among other actors he used Pinkethman, Husband, Wilks, Bullock, Mrs. Moor, and Mrs. Hook, all of whom had already done so well in plays by Farquhar; and Farquhar, on the eve of producing his own new and original play, now had to see this cast completely winning the town with an adaptation, an expedient with which, in *The Inconstant*, he had himself failed.

But the vital need of Farquhar, none the less, was to get on with *The Twin Rivals* regardless of competition. Upon finishing the draft of it he let it be read, no doubt at the instigation of the wily Christopher Rich, by certain *illuminati* of the theatre. They raised objections: not to the twin brothers, nor to the lawyer, nor the Irish servant, nor to the character of a rake, called Richmore, nor to his nephew Trueman, the hero (into whom Farquhar according to habit

THE COMEDY OF EXPOSURE

wrote himself, this time as one who struck the moral key of the play), but to a most alarming character, Mrs. Mandrake, who by elaborate machinations combined midwifery with procuring. Those who read the play, or who heard Farquhar himself read it, thought they ought to suppress it. They even went out and told their womenfolk 'formidable stories of a midwife'. These ladies of London, Farquhar suspected, 'were told no doubt that they must expect no less than a labour upon the stage'. True, Clelia, a young woman talked about in the play but not appearing, was pregnant. But although in the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes the present author could have pointed to a classic precedent for what he called 'showing a lady of figure under a misfortune', he 'made her only nominal, and chose to expose the person that injured her'. Notwithstanding the objections which had flared up, Farquhar, what with his friends in the management and amongst the actors, got the play on. His argument against his adversaries was that the only way to disappoint the designs of Jeremy Collier was to 'improve upon his invective, and to make the stage flourish by virtue of that satire by which he thought fit to suppress it'.

The company of players in Drury Lane were fairly stable, as if in repertory. Farquhar found that nine of his thirteen parts in *The Twin Rivals* were to be taken by those who had acted in his earlier comedies. Of the newcomers, William Bowen as Teague, and Mary Hook as Aurelia, a young woman pursued by Richmore, were old friends with whom the author had played Etherege in Smock Alley; there he had also met Benjamin Husband, who was to act Richmore. Only Minns, in the minor part of Fairbank a goldsmith, was hitherto unknown. For the rest, the twins Hermes and Ben Wou'dbee (a name evidently taken over from Sir Politick Would-be in Ben Jonson's *Volpone*) were Wilks and Cibber; Mills, the melodious and graceful, was Trueman; comic Pinkey was Subtleman the lawyer; Johnson doubled in the small bits of Balderdash an innkeeper and Alderman a suppliant; Fairbank (the actor) was the steward, Clear-account; the heroine Constance, fiancée of Hermes, was Mrs. Rogers; Mrs. Moor, who had ably played the maid in both *Love and a Bottle* and *A Trip to the Jubilee*, got the minor

piece of the steward's wife; and not least, the part of Mrs. Mandrake went to a man, Bullock, of the lively countenance and comic vivacity; he was now aged forty-five.

The first night was set for December 14, when *She Would and She Would Not* was less than three weeks old, and still popular. Farquhar let Peter Motteux again write the prologue. As for *The Inconstant* Motteux had compared a play to the courses of a supper, so now he likened it to the siege of a city, its beleaguered governor being the dramatist, whom the audience stormed. Motteux ended his lines by appealing for at least two benefit nights for the author;

‘If we must yield, yet ere the day be fixt,

Let us hold out the Third – and, if we may, the Sixth.’

From the invariable tenor of the prologues in this age, one would think that no dramatist, no manager, nor any audience, ever expected a new play to be tolerated beyond a single showing. To say that the crowd in the pit were exacting is putting it gently.

What the audience saw in the first act of *The Twin Rivals* was as precious a trio of villains as ever crossed the Restoration stage. Was not this comedy a melodrama, this conspiracy of ‘hard’ characters? Whither was George Farquhar drifting? Ben Wou’dbee, the younger twin, a hunchback, hated his father and brother and was planning to seduce his absent brother’s fiancée. His father’s death then being announced, he designed to cheat his brother out of the estate, with the help of Mandrake. Richmore, having got the unseen Clelia with child, hired Mandrake to marry off the girl to his own nephew Trueman, in order that Richmore himself might repeat his trick with Aurelia, whom he would then palm off, with Mandrake’s aid, upon another kinsman, at Cambridge.

In Wycherley it was the singularity of characters that appealed to Farquhar. As Olivia, in *The Plain Dealer*, may have provided a hint for Lady Lurewell, so the Widow Blackacre in the same play could well have prompted the development of Mandrake. It was clear that Mandrake was to be as conspicuous a character even as Chaucer’s Wife of Bath. It was not so clear, thus far, that the audience would get from this play what they clamoured for by way of a hero. Restoration comedy favoured by the town, for example, *The*

THE COMEDY OF EXPOSURE

Country Wife, had for its hero such a frisky character as Horner. But now Ben Wou'dbee, with the vices of Horner but with none of his redeeming traits, appeared quite as prominently in the present plot, and was a villain, and he was only emphasized by Richmore, not contrasted with him. A strange part, an ugly part, to be played by Colley Cibber, the peerless comedian.

The second act discovered the faithful Constance and the coquettish Aurelia, met by Trueman in the park, who revealed his love for Aurelia. Mandrake then launched her second conspiracy, with Ben Wou'dbee, suggesting a forged letter from Germany saying the elder brother Hermes was killed in a duel, the letter to be delivered to the steward of the estate in Ben's presence; she suggested also a will forged by her lawyer Subtleman, leaving all the property to Ben. Not content with this, Ben required Mandrake to get him Constance for a mistress. Richmore then stepped in and forwarded his designs by disparaging Aurelia to the astonished Trueman. In the closing scene, Subtleman ghoulishly proposed to Wou'dbee to obtain the 'last words' of Ben's father by putting a piece of paper with the words written on it into the mouth of the corpse. (Was this one of Longueville's 'nice quilllets'?) 'I'll swear to nothing,' said Subtleman, 'but what I see with my eyes come out of a man's mouth'. Whoever in the audience might be shocked by this stretch of crime could not but applaud its ingenuity. Wou'dbee, agreeing to Subtleman's trick, ended with a soliloquy in the manner of Edmund, in *Lear*: 'Why injustice? The world has broke all civilities with me. . . . My brother! What a brother! . . . He stands before me in the road of life to rob me of my pleasures. . . .'

In the middle of the play Ben, having got possession, held a levée, in what later critics would call true Hogarthian fashion. Then the elder twin, Hermes, with his man Teague, arrived near the house, saw his brother borne by in a chair, and heard that his father was dead. Subtleman, looking about for another witness to suborn, picked up Teague, and took him to dine. Hermes got the news of Ben's doings from Fairbank the goldsmith. Whilst Constance was lamenting the supposed death of Hermes, Mandrake overtook her and

tried, but with little effect, to impress upon her the desirability of Ben. Hermes then appeared and discovered himself to Constance, who was with Aurelia. Trueman came on, twitted Aurelia even as she had upon their earliest meeting affected indifference to him, and left her crying. But the chief contrivance of this scene was to bring Trueman and Hermes together to join forces.

Whatever the audience may have thought of *The Twin Rivals* thus far, none could deny that the plot moved. Above all his contemporaries, Farquhar was the dynamic dramatist.

In the fourth act, Ben and Subtleman nearly persuaded Hermes, who confronted them, that the forged will was genuine. But Subtleman, the 'worm and maggot of the law', as Hermes later reviled him, said the witnesses were himself and a footman, and going off to produce the footman, fortunately for Hermes fetched in Teague, who, of course, revealed that he had played the knave with Subtleman. At this point the melodramatic Mandrake emerged from a 'closet' and swore, as midwife when the twins were born, that Ben was the elder. It was then the cue of Subtleman to call constables, whom Ben told that Hermes was mad, whereat the constables hauled Hermes off. When Teague, encountering Constance, apprised her that Hermes was in gaol, both Constance and Teague hurried thither, together with Trueman. Hermes whispered a plan to Trueman, who proceeded to borrow the costume of the gaoler. On the other side of the plot, Richmore, in a scene with Aurelia, was so far from persuading her that his advances would be welcome that she struck him. At this contretemps Mandrake and Richmore planned a seduction of Aurelia in Mandrake's house.

While it was by this time clear that evil would in the end 'be thwarted', all had to allow that Farquhar was most cleverly keeping up the suspense; the precise nature of the unravelling could not be foreseen. In the final act Trueman confronted Ben, told him Hermes had hanged himself, and said that he, Trueman, intended to kill the conniving hunchback. Constance lured Ben, by letter, to come to her. Trueman and Teague, passing Mandrake's house, heard cries from Aurelia, at a window, for help. As they broke in

THE COMEDY OF EXPOSURE

and rescued her, Teague caught Mandrake, while Trueman made Richmore promise to marry Clelia. Elsewhere, Constance was bandying words with Ben until Hermes, running in, fought with his brother, upon which collision Trueman fetched in the captive Mandrake, who confessed that Hermes was the elder twin. In the event, of course, Trueman paired with Aurelia and Hermes with Constance, an ending conventional enough to what was in fact a tragi-comedy, somewhat like Congreve's *Double Dealer*.

Into twenty-four hours Farquhar had compressed so much that the effect was less unified than unconvincing. It was rather pseudo-Farquhar than Farquhar 'in his humour'. Aurelia (Mrs. Hook), speaking as if after a conversation with the author, gave the epilogue, in which she also saluted the new Queen Anne:

'. . . I thought meet,
To tell him there was left one safe retreat,
Protection sacred, at the ladies' feet.
To that he answered in submissive strain,
He paid all homage to this female reign,
And therefore turned his satire 'gainst the men.
From your great Queen, this sovereign right ye draw,
To keep the Wits, and she the World in awe . . .
The play can tell with what poetic care
He laboured to redress the injured fair . . .'

Here, then, in *The Twin Rivals*, was a turning point not only in the career of Farquhar as a dramatist, but in Restoration comedy itself, an evolution from immorality into moralizing. Again the author faced his critics, a larger and more varied lot, this time, than those who had read the play before its production. He himself said Jeremy Collier had piqued him into showing how moral and satirical he could be. His purpose was 'to expose the middle sort of wickedness'. He thought, he said, 'to have soothed the splenetic zeal of the City by making a gentleman (Ben Wou'dbee) a knave, and punishing their great grievance, a whoremaster (Richmore).' But 'a certain virtuoso of that fraternity' advised him that the citizens were never more disappointed in any entertainment. 'However pious we may appear to be at home,' said he, 'yet we never go to that end of the town but with an intention to be lewd'.

Their great grievance, it seemed, was not so much what Farquhar himself believed it to be, but rather that his play was an innovation. More critics, who were a bit sensitive on the subject of Richmore, objected that Farquhar was in Ben Wou'dbee pointing at a particular person. This he denied. 'Characters in plays,' he retorted, 'are like Long-lane clothes, not hung out for the use of any particular people, but to be bought by only those they appear to fit.' Nor did he see anything individual in the character of Richmore except that he had to marry his own mistress. Yet, Farquhar slyly added, Richmore 'was no sooner off the stage but he changed his mind, and the poor lady is still in statu quo'. As for others who complained that Clelia should have trodden the stage, the author said he preferred that they should find this fault, rather than that he should forfeit the regard of the ladies, who should be no more offended by not seeing Clelia than by the rough treatment meted out in the end to such a bawd as Mandrake. Perhaps the real difficulty with *The Twin Rivals* was that it contained too many scoundrels for comedy, yet, lacking bloodshed, was no tragedy. The middle galleries denied 'middle wickedness'.

Apart from such criticism against various characters, Farquhar had to defend his choice of subject. Were not such vices too great for comedy to punish? Did not the punishment of vice fall rather into the province of tragedy? 'But if there be a middle sort of wickedness,' he reiterated, 'too high for the sock, and too low for the buskin, is there any reason that it should go unpunished? What are more obnoxious to humane society than the villainies exposed in this play – the frauds, plots, and contrivances upon the fortunes of men and the virtues of women? But the persons are too mean for the heroic. Then what must we do with them? Why, they must of necessity drop into comedy'.

Withal, Farquhar believed there was no need to make any elaborate defence of his work. He sought refuge in 'the opinion of some of the greatest persons in England, both for quality and parts', in whose approbation he took some pride, that the play had merit enough to hide more faults than had been found.

THE COMEDY OF EXPOSURE

This was rather a vague statement of the positive side. Farquhar did not specify just what merit the great ones had acclaimed, which characters they applauded, nor what turns of plot they commended him for. In point of fact, the critics eventually allowed that *The Twin Rivals* was the most 'complete and regular' of Farquhar's plays. A thing they might well have now mentioned, for example, was that here for the first time this author had shaken himself practically free of the mechanical devices of disguise and of mistaken identity. The title, *The Twin Rivals*, could easily have implied that the plot rested on tricks of such identity. But even the twins were differentiated, at sight, to the extent that one of them was a hunchback.

What more nearly touched Farquhar's actual welfare, as he wryly observed, was that 'the galleries were so thin' during the run of this play. Why this apathy of the herd? 'A play,' Farquhar taunted his public, 'without a beau, cully, cuckold, or coquette is as poor an entertainment to some palates as their Sunday's dinner would be without beef and pudding.' Neither cully nor cuckold had he included at all in his parade of characters, not even a wife, except the thievish wife of the steward, and she in a single scene, with little to do. Trueman, though Farquhar himself, was too mild a beau, and Aurelia was too far off a coquette. The galleries had wanted to see, had rather expected, another Harry Wildair and Lady Lurewell, for what did the galleries care about Jeremy Collier? In their dissatisfaction the public remained away from *The Twin Rivals*, but pressed into Drury Lane in throngs on the evenings in which *She Would and She Would Not* was the attraction.

Nevertheless Farquhar, almost as if in a hurried effort to increase his audiences, had the play published within nine days of its first performance, that is, on December 23, only just in time for Christmas. On the day before publication Bernard Lintot had given him £15 for it, a sum which made the total gained from Christopher Rich look not quite so meagre. It was Rich's custom to take, for himself, two shillings in the pound out of the receipts each night, leaving the salaries of the actors indeterminate, and a share for the author rather more so.

This time Farquhar dedicated his play to another friend, Henry Bret, M.P. for Bishop's Castle, Salop, a man who was doubly interested in *The Twin Rivals* because he was also not only a friend, but an intimate, of the actor who played Ben Wou'dbee, Colley Cibber. Bret had boldly married, only two years before, the divorced Countess of Macclesfield, a lady reputed to be not averse to bearing illegitimate children. On the word of Farquhar, Bret was a man of wit, ingenuity, and good nature, a man who although he could discover the author's smallest fault, could pardon his greatest. He was no scholar, but a good talker; indeed, 'there was nothing new in wit, but what was found in his conversation'. Above all, Bret was one of those 'great ones', in parts if not in blood, who had given the play his generous praise. As authors always chose a staunch actor to address the audience in a prologue, so they pitched upon a gentleman of undisputed 'ingenuity' to recommend them to the reader. 'Books,' said Farquhar, 'like metals, require to be stamped with some valuable effigies before they become popular and current.'

Wherefore this little book should have got away upon a fair wind, and should have somewhat bolstered up the play. It did neither. *The Twin Rivals* ran for thirteen performances – one-quarter of the run of the *Jubilee* – and though this might have been twice as encouraging as the six nights of *The Inconstant*, it was not enough, and poor Farquhar had to own to another comparative failure. When the sales of the book as well only reflected that short run, he grew bitter. He saw himself 'assaulted with the ignorance of partial and prejudiced readers'. Self-called critics did not confine their attacks to the play; they redoubled their onslaught as soon as they professed having read the book of it. 'Because it looked upon all with an impartial eye,' later rejoined Farquhar defiantly, brooding upon what they said of this book, 'and, remote from servile flattery, spared not nearest relations, taxing not their persons but their vices, (it) is hated for speaking truth. But those galled camels whom it touched to the quick, their anger I as much scorn as pity.'

These detractors were taking scant notice of the most distinguished thing about *The Twin Rivals* – its originality.

THE COMEDY OF EXPOSURE

The kindness and decency written into a scene in Act III between Hermes and Fairbank was alone an innovation, a far cry from the twisted writing of Farquhar's compeers. Disturbed as the critics were that Farquhar had cut quite away from the coffee-house set, and had given over philandering with men's wives in order to show up the perils of maidens, they squirmed, like Hamlet's uncle, at seeing their own sins enacted, and the reality of them heightened, in the person of so brutally accurate a character as Mrs. Mandrake. The detractors asked for wit, brilliant but artificial, much as Wycherley and Congreve had provided them with; Farquhar gave them humour, grim humour, in conversation so natural that the guilty ones in the audience felt themselves not spectators, but rather participants, in what was going on. At the height of the play, at the very start of Act IV, they had heard this dialogue between Mrs. Mandrake and the hunchback Wou'dbee:

MAN: Well, my Lord (*pants as out of breath*), you'll ne'er be satisfied till you have broken my poor heart. I have had such ado yonder about you with Madam Constance. — But she's your own.

BEN: How! my own? Ah, my dear helpmate, I'm afraid we are routed in that quarter: my brother's come home.

MAN: Your brother come home! Then *I'll* go travel.

BEN: Hold, hold, Madam, we are all secure; we have provided for his reception; your nephew Subtleman has stopt up all passages to the estate.

MAN: Ay, Subtleman is a pretty, thriving, ingenious boy. Little do you think who is the father of him. I'll tell you: Mr. Moabite, the rich Jew in Lombard-street.

BEN: Moabite the Jew!

MAN: You shall hear, my Lord. One evening as I was very grave in my own house, reading the — Weekly Preparation — ay, it was the Weekly Preparation, I do remember particularly well — What hears me I — but pat, pat, pat very softly at the door. Come in, cries I, and presently enters Mr. Moabite, followed by a snug chair, the windows close drawn, and in it a fine young virgin just upon the point of being delivered. We were all in a great hurly-burly for a while, to

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

be sure; but our production was a fine boy. I had fifty guineas for my trouble; the lady was wrapt up very warm, placed in her chair, and re-conveyed to the place she came from. Who she was, or what she was, I could never learn, though my maid said that the chair went through the park – but the child was left with me – the father would have made a Jew on't presently; but I swore, if he committed such a barbarity on the infant, that I would discover all – so I had him prentice to an attorney.

BEN: Very well!

MAN: Ah, my Lord, there's many a pretty fellow in London that knows as little of their true father and mother as he does. I have had several such jobs in my time – there was one Scotch nobleman that brought me four in half a year.

BEN: Four! and how were they all provided for?

MAN: Very handsomely indeed. They were two sons and two daughters; the eldest son rides in the first troop of guards, and the 'tother is a very pretty fellow, and his father's valet de chambre.

BEN: And what became of the daughters, pray?

MAN: Why, one of 'em is a mantua-maker, and the youngest has got into the playhouse. – Ay, ay, my Lord, let Subtleman alone. I'll warrant he'll manage your brother.

Scenes like these struck home, too deep home, it seemed, in the London winter of 1702. Farquhar, who sent his own young women like Chloe 'out of town' after they had 'mis-carried', knew his Mandrakes, verbatim. One of that kidney flourishing at the moment was a certain Mrs. Phipps, who drove her iniquitous trade in Watling Street, just back of St. Paul's, beneath the sinister but significant sign of the 'Coffin and Cradle'. (Reversed, these words would have indicated the usual transition of the infants born thereat.) In this identical winter a merry member of Farquhar's 'ingenious acquaintance', Captain Dick Steele, on behalf of 'one of his damosels that had sworn an unborn child by him', was making use of Mrs. Phipps, though at no such cost as Mrs. Mandrake extorted from Moabite. Steele agreed to 'an

inclusive fee of £22'. He did pay Phipps £5 of it; but if the woman ever got the rest she was lucky.

Whether or not this question of midwives hit too many guilty consciences in the audience at Drury Lane, Farquhar had to pay for his propinquity to truth, for his projection of the cleavage between right and wrong, by row upon row of empty seats in the galleries. It was enough to make him want to quit Drury Lane, and to try his fortunes at the New House, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, as, at the time he had published *The Inconstant*, he said he must do. Was that the house which had more favours to bestow? Or would a sort of poetical justice continue to support the other? Late or soon, George Farquhar must make the decision.

His hopes, so dazzling on the crest of the success of *A Trip to the Jubilee* – those fifty-three performances now seemed a very long time ago – his hopes had ebbed almost to despondency. He had thought he knew enough about his craft, certainly, to write another play worth fifty nights. Now, on the heels of the six-night failure of *The Inconstant* a fate not vastly better for *The Twin Rivals*, and that in the same year, was all the harder to bear. True, this latest work had proved a bit more durable than any of his previous comedies except the *Jubilee*. But the actual number of performances of *The Twin Rivals* was not the thing most telling. What did alarm Farquhar was those deserted galleries. In them it was that he either held or forfeited his public, the general public from the middle classes down, at whom he always aimed, and upon whose support he staked his standing. He had triumphantly won them with *Wildair* and *Lady Lurewell*, only to lose them with *Ben Wou'dbee* and *Mrs. Mandrake*.

CHAPTER XIII

MARGARET PEMELL

As if his critics and enemies had not belaboured him enough, Farquhar found that their ill will pursued him into the year 1703. A malicious pamphlet, *Religio Poetae, or A Satire on the Poets*, reached the tables of Will's and of White's. Its jab at Farquhar centred in this blithe couplet:

‘His fame he built on mighty Davenant’s wit,
And lately owned a play he never writ.’

On the margin of the page graced by these lines *The Twin Rivals* was named as the play referred to. The rhymester of *Religio Poetae* tried to fasten the authorship of Farquhar's comedy upon two others, William Longueville and ‘one of our famous poets’. It seemed that the word of Farquhar, in his own preface to *The Twin Rivals*, was to be scoffed at. Therein Farquhar had given full credit to Longueville for help in connection with Teague, with Subtle, and with the idea of the twins, but had added, ‘few of our modern writers have been less beholden to foreign (extraneous) assistance in their plays than I have been in the following scenes’. But Longueville, plus Davenant, constituted ‘a play he never writ’. In what style Farquhar had derived anything that counted from so obsolescent a figure as Davenant the writer of *Religio* rather failed to furnish chapter and verse. He was satisfied to twit an author, whose total achievement he envied, when that author was momentarily down.

However, anyone who heard the prologues and epilogues which Farquhar was in this same winter producing for the plays of other writers would hardly have considered him unduly depressed. Farquhar indeed was doing less well than he had done with *A Trip to the Jubilee*; but what were his contemporaries putting on the stage? Charles Gildon, who had tried everything from deism to drama, and at Lincoln's

MARGARET PEMELL

Inn Fields had suffered appalling public indifference to both tragedy and comedy which he had offered, was now with a new play, *The Patriot: or, The Italian Conspiracy*, changing his theatre, setting his hopes upon Christopher Rich at Drury Lane. Gildon lacked an epilogue, and Farquhar humorously obliged Rich with one:

'I could not, for my life, see this poor rogue
Have his play lost for want of epilogue.'

Farquhar went on to invite all side-box beaux to meet at White's afterward and make a party. Even that did not save Gildon. His play, a tragedy half borrowed from Nat. Lee, was 'lost' in any case, and Gildon fled the theatre for ten years.

Again, Francis Manning, an obscure wretch who had previously written only one play and that one bad, was in need of a prologue – to be spoken by Robert Wilks – for a comedy entitled *All for the Better: or, The Infallible Cure*, and Farquhar, ever ready to assist the powerful Mr. Rich, responded with a welcome to the troops home victorious from the Dutch campaign, but at the same time hailing the four things which held sway over his own daily thoughts: the stage, the beaux, the ladies, and the critics:

'Rejoice, the stage – all rural sports are fled,
Fields cast their green, and trees their beauty shed.
Nature is chilled abroad with winter's rage,
And now looks pleasing only on the stage.
Rejoice, ye beaux – for now the season comes
To hush Bellona, and to silence drums.
The troops for winter quarters now come in,
And now your brisk campaigns at home begin.
See there (*to the Boxes*) a prospect of fair wealthy towns
Stored with strong magazines of looks and frowns;
Of foreign dangers let those talk who please;
We beaux will swear no town beyond the seas
Has killed us half the men as one of these.
But ladies – have a care, your time will come:
The conquering Venlo sparks are coming home.
If on the jaws of death at honour's call
They bravely rushed – no pillage, but a wall,
How would they storm such fortresses as those
Whence so much sweet and wealthy plunder flows?
Trust me, ye fair, no strength can theirs withstand;

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

A soldier is the devil, with sword in hand.
Rejoice, ye sparks – that walk about and buff
From Will's to Tom's, and so take towns and snuff.
Ye now shall be employ'd, each have his wench,
And so perhaps ye may engage the French.
Rejoice, ye critics – who the pit do cram,
For ye shall have a glut of plays – to damn.'

Farquhar was writing with quite as gay a spirit as if he were putting down these lines for a new play of his own. The precise dates of production for both Manning and Gildon are unrecorded; but neither play was printed until the turn of the year 1703. Nor had poor Manning any better luck with his comedy than Gildon had with his tragedy.

But the relatively cheerful frame of mind of George Farquhar at the moment, notwithstanding the recent end of the run of *The Twin Rivals*, may have been somewhat due to a tendency to look upon a certain lady with whom he was now involved as being, herself, 'so much sweet and wealthy plunder'. While no dramatist who could write a play that would run for thirteen performances needed by any means to give up authorship, did this lady seem to make it less urgent that he should work? How long had he known her? Was she that 'lady in mourning' who a year or so before had sat upon his right at church? 'I came, I saw, and was conquered. . . . Nothing upon earth, Madam, can charm beyond your wit, but your beauty . . . tell me plainly what I have to hope for . . . after a sight of such a face, whose whole composition is a smile of good nature, why should I be so unjust as to suspect you of cruelty? . . . let me beg to receive my sentence from your own mouth, that I may hear you speak, and see you look at the same time. Then let me be unfortunate if I can.'

Whatever the immediate result of this impassioned appeal had been – Farquhar was furthermore a young wooer who could talk as passionately as he could write – and to whomsoever he had addressed it, the fact is that early in this year of 1703 if not before, he was devoting himself, beyond deviation, to a widow.

She was Mrs. Margaret Pemell, relict of an Army officer who had been serving in south Ireland. She was about ten years older than George Farquhar. That was no impediment

— not to him. Had not his two Susannahs, Mrs. Verbruggen his intimate and Mrs. Carroll his actual mistress, each been ten years his senior? It was from older women, indeed, that he seemed to draw inspiration. But Mrs. Pemell was also encumbered with the rather frightening burden of three children. However could young Farquhar, with nothing in his pocket except what he had left (after paying his debts) from the benefit performances of *The Twin Rivals*, dream of assuming such a load as this family? One mitigation was that the eldest of the Pemell offspring, a son, had just gone into the Navy as a letterman; but that still left two to be maintained. There was something improvidently Irish about this rash entanglement. It seemed also as mad as the case of Dick Steele's father, who, likewise low in funds, had married the Dublin widow Elinor Sims when she had a stepdaughter, a daughter, and another child unborn.

What, then, was the attraction in Mrs. Pemell for Farquhar, apart from his probable love for her? Bluntly, had she anything in the bank? On this score her life with her late husband Benjamin Pemell had been unfortunate, and in truth her present prospects in respect of funds were uncertain, perhaps more so than the reckless young Farquhar took the trouble to investigate. Margaret Pemell did have a fortune, 'not inconsiderable', at the time of her first marriage. Not only that, but her husband had £1,000 a year of his own. He was an officer in Ireland in Colonel Thomas St. John's regiment of foot. But he had no sense of finance, and he lost first his own patrimony, and then his wife's as well, 'through some sinister accidents' — all befalling in the 1690's with a young family growing up.

Nor did Pemell bear in mind the necessities of his wife and children even when he came by gains fortuitously. For example, it happened that at about the time when George Farquhar was making ready to leave Dublin for London, at the end of 1696, a time when the Irish coastal seas were infested with French pirates, whom the British troops enlivened their own existence by chasing, Benjamin Pemell, upon a certain likely day, manned a fishing boat with some of his company, sailed into the deep, and captured a French privateer. Pemell killed eight pirates, and wounded fourteen

more, including the captain. Then he brought the boat into Youghal. Though he might easily have taken some of its plunder for himself, and that the lion's share, he gave away the whole of the spoils to his soldiers.

Pemell may have expected recompense from another direction. At all events, the Earl of Romney, formerly Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, to whom the news of Pemell's exploit was conveyed, thought fit to inform the King. William III was pleased, and promised a reward for Pemell. Romney even declared in Council that in any case he would take care of an officer so brave. Not long thereafter, whilst consideration of the reward was still pending, Benjamin Pemell, as ill luck had its way, was killed. When this news reached the King he was good enough not to drop the matter, but assured Margaret Pemell of a pension for the subsistence of herself and the children. The adversity of the widow, however, was not ended. If Pemell had lived, continuing, as he doubtless would have done, his distinguished service, his reward might well have been paid in due course; after his death, the question of a pension had to be considered through another channel, with the consequent delays. The settlement was still hanging fire when William III himself died.

It was accordingly not without some vexation of spirit that Margaret Pemell had brought her brood over to London. How far would the new sovereign, Queen Anne, feel it incumbent upon her to carry out the pension commitments of her predecessor? Mrs. Pemell had at least arrived upon the scene whence such favours were granted, and that was better than languishing in Youghal or Dublin. Unhappily she could count upon no intervention from Lord Romney. Though Groom of the Stole at the time King William died, at Anne's accession he had been dismissed his various offices. Apart from that, Romney's personal interest in the dashing Pemell, his own desire to 'take care of' him, seemed not to extend to the family, but ceased when that officer was killed.

This was the position of a certain lady in mourning at the time George Farquhar was paying court to her in 1703, a time when she herself, indeed, was said to be 'pursuing' him. The story goes that Margaret Pemell was 'infatuated' with

her boy dramatist, that 'so violent was her love for him she resolved to leave nothing untried to get him'. Since she believed that Farquhar was 'much too dissipated to fall in love, or think of matrimony, unless advantage was attached to it', the widow 'gave herself out' for a great fortune, and then let him know she was in love with him. This does not sound quite like the lady in black at the church, who, at least in Farquhar's early experience with her, was more pursued than pursuing. On the other hand, while he was charmed with the wit and beauty of that lady, he was in the present case 'charmed with her love and understanding'. The identity may be not too remote. At any rate, it was one thing for George Farquhar to chase a potential mistress, and quite another to be brought up square against marriage as a condition. A man may with little interval run in two directions.

Flighty and volatile as he was apt to be, Farquhar could not have enquired too closely into the actual income of his admirer, even into the question whether a pension, if indeed forthcoming, would cease as soon as a widow remarried. To this extent he now belied what he had only a year before said of himself in 'The Picture': 'I would have my passion, if not led, yet at least waited on by my reason'. Margaret Pemell is chastely reputed to have possessed 'mental and personal endowments' which Farquhar 'appreciated', however little her financial endowment might bear inspection. Seemingly the conquest of reason by passion was what prevailed, even in the mind of a woman of thirty-five who expected to hold a philandering, improvident and irresponsible husband of twenty-five.

They were married early in this very year, 1703. And so the young rake of manifold love affairs, not a few seductions, and a notorious variety of mistresses, yet the victim of jilts too, the young beau about Drury Lane whose every written word, whether in letter or essay, in poetry or prose, in dialogue or dedication, in preface or play, had seemed to establish that he knew more than enough about the cautious choice of a wife, took upon himself a widow ten years his senior with two children still dependent, herself with no palpable supply of means to draw upon – all this George

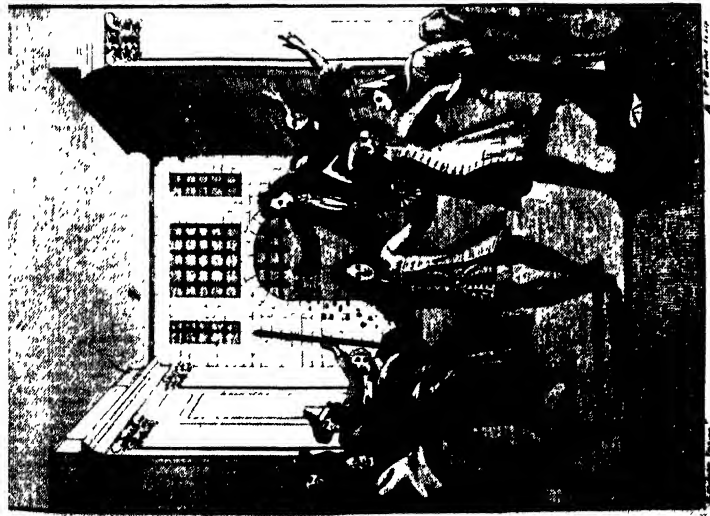
Farquhar shouldered at a time whilst he for his own part was in debt.

It is not to be presumed that his difficulties struck home to him at once. Margaret Farquhar, in the first months of her new marriage, would have every reason to conceal her shortage of funds. In any case things were happening in this season of 1703 that may well have distracted the attention of her young husband away from domesticity.

For instance, in April his old companion of the coffee-houses, the Hon. Charles Boyle, who had resigned his seat in the Irish Parliament and was now M.P. for Huntingdon, produced a comedy, *As You Find It*, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. But Boyle, as godfather to Swift's *Battle of the Books*, proved a better inspirer than creator of works of art. While his dialogue was sensible enough, the three love affairs which he should have interwoven did not touch one another at all; he quite lost track of his own plot. Hardly had this effort vanished from the New Theatre when Boyle's brother the Earl of Orrery died, and Charles Boyle himself succeeded. He had now more to do; it was as well that he, like Gildon, abstained from playwriting.

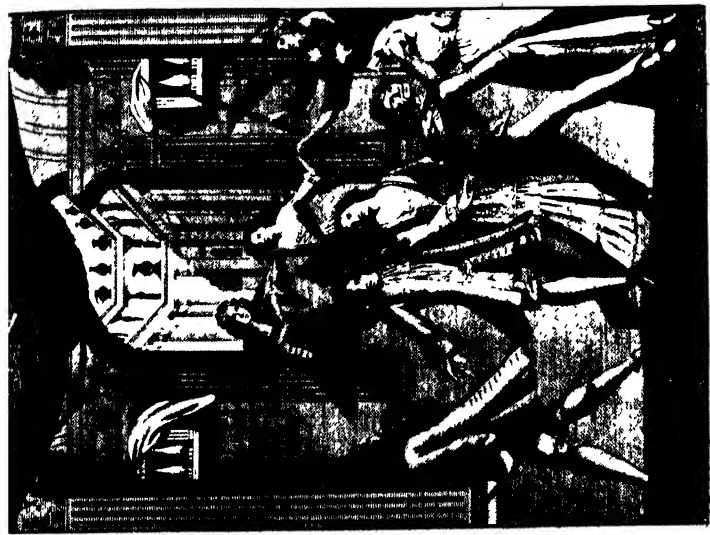
Not so Susanna Carroll, who after her tragedy *The Perjured Husband* had turned to comedy, and now, in June of this year, put on her fourth play, *Love's Contrivance*, at Drury Lane. In her preface to it she said, 'I believe Mr. Rich will own he got more from a *Trip to the Jubilee* with all its irregularities than by the most uniform piece the stage could boast of ever since'. Rich got more, but alas, not Farquhar, however many revivals the *Jubilee* was enjoying. Were the words of his old mistress any consolation in this year of his new responsibilities? Farquhar had made *The Twin Rivals* 'regular'.

Another thing on the tapis, as the summer advanced, was that Colley Cibber was taking a company of players to Bath, where Queen Anne was for the moment in residence. He of course wanted Susannah Verbruggen, as leading comedienne of the day, to join them, particularly to play her old part of Lemora in John Crowne's *Sir Courtly Nice*. But Susannah was too ill to go, as she was about to lie in. Cibber, looking round for a substitute, invited Anne Oldfield to try what



A TRIP TO THE JUBILEE

End of Act II. Sir Harry Wildair beating Smuggler



THE TWIN RIVALS

End of the play. Audelia rescued by Triuman from



WILLIAM FARQUHAR, ESQ.
*From an original Picture in the Collection of
 Her Grace the Duchess of Devon*

Engraved by R. Baker from the original

The famous 'Plain Dealer' in his later years, in the 1690's,
 at about the time Farquhar first saw him in Will's

she could do. While she was now only twenty, she had been four years an actress, and she had not quite come up to the expectations which Farquhar had of her when he discovered her in her aunt's taproom and recommended her to the managers.

Perhaps this young miss of the lovely figure, the sprightly air, the silvery voice and speaking eyes, had not been too fortunate thus far in the parts that had fallen to her, none of them by a major dramatist of the day. (Her first two appearances, in unimportant works by Dryden and Vanbrugh, were too experimental to count.) Farquhar's play-writing lady friends Susanna Carroll and Catherine Trotter had each provided Anne with parts; so had Oldmixon, Thomas Baker, Elkanah Settle, and Tom Durfey. Yet her only chance of any note had come from Steele, when she enacted Lady Sharlot in *The Funeral*. But that was not enough – at least so long as Susannah Verbruggen and Anne Bracegirdle held the first favours of London. 'A Comparison' had unkindly described Mrs. Oldfield as 'mere rubbish, that ought to be swept off the stage with the filth and dust'. At the other extreme, it called Mrs. Verbruggen 'a miracle'. Cibber took neither of these judgments too seriously. Anne Oldfield duly came on at Bath in *Sir Courtly Nice*, giving all she had as Lemora, with the result that Cibber recognized her capabilities, quite reversing his earlier view that she 'spoke flat, plain, formal'. Meanwhile Susannah Verbruggen in London died in childbirth.

The meaning of these two events to George Farquhar was that the way now lay open for Anne Oldfield to take over the part of Lady Lurewell, and equally of Bizarre, if *The Inconstant* should be revived as he had expected it would. But he must first have thought of the personal loss he had incurred in Mrs. Verbruggen. From the moment of her great hit in *A Trip to the Jubilee* Farquhar had enjoyed her intimacy – Susannah the fair, the full-featured, the versatile, Susannah of the amazingly adaptable voice, whose charm whether on the stage or off, was to laugh or flirt with her fan, and whose mimicry, whether off the stage or on, was the delight of London. Her adorers had said she was 'like nature', that she was 'the easiest actress in the world'. If no

part in a play could be flat with her, if she sharpened all characters that she played, she it was to whom Farquhar in large degree owed his fame as the creator of Lady Lurewell. And now Susannah Verbruggen was dead at the age of thirty-six. Could Anne Oldfield do as much for him, either in characters of the past or in those possibly to come? With some chagrin, Farquhar had found himself unequal to sustaining the love affair he had undertaken with Anne. She bestowed her affections elsewhere. But so, now, for that matter, had George Farquhar. He and Anne might be finished with the intimacies of love. But in the triumphs of the theatre, it was highly probable, they had something to get on with.

Yet Farquhar in his novel capacity of husband was not writing. It was as if by marrying he had offended his Muse; or as if the shock of no longer being the irresponsible lover of half a dozen women at once had dried him up. His idleness had now grown a serious matter, since the fortune of his wife Margaret, the 'sweet plunder', had definitely not materialized. That was perhaps a shock still greater than monogamy. Instead of being pleasantly adopted by his wife as an additional member of her family, Farquhar, emerging from a prolonged honeymoon, was grimly made aware that he had three mouths to feed as well as his own.

At this crisis the man with whom Farquhar stood in such extraordinary relations of mutual gratitude, Bob Wilks, stepped to the fore, and made the slightly ironic suggestion that George write a farce. To encourage Farquhar at once, Wilks brought an idea with him: Farquhar need merely produce another adaptation, this time from the French, with which Peter Motteux, the hanger-on, would assist him. Wilks, now earning far more as an actor than Farquhar ever dreamed of as an author, having in this year alone, as leader of the London stage, appeared in half a dozen new plays, not to mention a string of revivals, was able to make his friend listen. And the persuasive power of Wilks at this juncture no doubt rested to a degree on the fact that he had every reason quite apart from pure friendship to keep Farquhar at work. It was upon Farquhar's comedies that Wilks had built a good share of his own eminence. In all of them

except *Love and a Bottle*, produced when he was still in Dublin, Wilks had played to immense applause: he *was* Wildair; he *was* Hermes Wou'dbee, while as Young Mirabel he had 'out-acted himself'.

The farce to be adapted was *Les Carrosses d'Orléans*, by Jean de la Chapelle. Its original was in twenty-seven 'scenes', but most of them only a page or two long. Farquhar decided to call his version *The Stage-Coach*, and to make of it a little three-act piece, adding fresh material in about the proportion he had supplied to *The Inconstant*. The stimulating thing about La Chapelle's play, from Farquhar's dramatic point of view, was that it was set in the country, whereas Farquhar had always laid his scene in town, indeed, in London, except *The Inconstant*, in the scene of which, Paris, he had followed Fletcher. Now here was a play from the French, not only in the country, but all of it at a roadside inn. The atmosphere was completely that of *Don Quixote*, and the adventures within it in the same tradition and of the same potential, with the clash of town and country characters, but wholly in the country – not in town as Wycherley had brought them together, nor partly in London and partly rural as Vanbrugh had done.

Farquhar in writing about the art of the dramatist – both in *Adventures of Covent Garden* and in his *Discourse upon Comedy* – had harangued at considerable length against the three unities. Now he was faced with a play which in the French manner, true to the Greeks, strictly observed all three, action, time, and place. In this respect the adapter wisely adapted himself to his model, notwithstanding he had rebelliously said, 'The rules of English comedy don't lie in the compass of Aristotle or his followers'.

Whether remodelling a play or writing one wholly new Farquhar seemed always to begin by seeing himself as the hero, if not the principal male character, and by building the action round that character according to propensities that were his own. His present fancy, begun with Trueman in *The Twin Rivals*, was to project his own personality as a captain in the Army. Wherefore he took La Chapelle's hero Cléante and turned him into Captain Basil, in love with the heroine Isabella (Angélique). The bearing of this story

upon Farquhar's future writing requires some scrutiny of its plot.

When Isabella's uncle Micher (La Chapelle's Cascar) in London designed to marry her to a country booby from Lancashire, Squire Nicodemus Somebody (Dodinet), Isabella implored Basil, who was in the north, to rush to her aid. But before he could reach London, Micher had left town with Isabella, and with Nicodemus who was also there, for the country house of the Somebodys. The south-bound stage-coach bearing Basil and other passengers stopt at The Angel, an inn on the road between Chester and London. Other characters whom Farquhar took over, in this coach, were Tom Jolt the driver (le Cocher), Fetch, Basil's servant (Crispin), and Macahone an Irishman (le Hollandois). He also included a farmer's daughter, a Quaker, a whore, and a parson. Having made some success in *The Twin Rivals* with Teague, Farquhar properly turned La Chapelle's Dutchman into a continuation of Teague. He reduced the original twelve characters to nine, omitting a rustic, a scullion, and a woman litigant, and replacing a cook by a constable. The north-bound coach bearing Isabella and her party also stopt, of course, at The Angel on the same night, and the plot, after its two short introductory acts, got well away in Act III.

Basil, not known in person to either Micher or Nicodemus, but posing as a friend of the latter's father, schemed at once to elope with Isabella, while Jolt was designing independently to slip into Dolly's room (Dolly being the maid at The Angel). Fetch suggested to Basil to get Dolly to unlock the gate of the inn. In the dark, Basil and Fetch encountered Jolt, who suspected them of the same intent upon Dolly as himself, and Jolt bit Fetch's finger. When a startled ostler entered with a light, Jolt pretended he was dreaming, and whipping his horses. As Basil chased the ostler away, Dolly entered, and Fetch for a guinea got from her the key of the gate. Jolt thought it was the key to Dolly's room.

Then Isabella came upon the scene, with a small trunk. Jolt, angrier than ever, thought she was Dolly. Whilst Uncle Micher joined the confusion, believing Isabella was walking in her sleep, that young lady called out for Basil,

at which Jolt was sure they were going to bed. Micher, thinking he had caught Isabella, laid hold of Jolt, and shouted for lights, upon which cry Basil, Isabella, and Fetch rushed off; but Fetch dropt the key. (This was Farquhar's own interpolation.) When the ostler with his light re-entered, Micher, demanding Isabella and Basil, called Jolt a pimp, to which unkind accusation Jolt retorted that Basil was 'in a room with his whore'. All Micher could do was to scream for a constable; the only answer to this summons was Nicodemus, who came in yawning.

Uncle pointed to the room, nephew-elect listened, and Jolt said he would get the landlord, he being also a constable. By this time complaining guests in nightgowns were appearing upstairs and down, and to them the bored Nicodemus divulged that a man was only making him a cuckold before his time. When the constable entered, Jolt broke open the door of Dolly's room. Then all argued as to which one should go in first, finally agreeing that all go in. At this point Dolly entered at another door and demanded to know what in heaven's name they were doing in her room; the persons whom they sought had fled.

But the constable then found the key which Fetch had dropt, whereat all parties noisily set about a search for the fugitives. At the height of the clamour Basil calmly entered in his nightgown, and Nicodemus, still thinking Basil the old friend of the Somebody family, besought his help. To the consternation of the crowd, Basil begged for quiet, lest they disturb his wife. But she was already up; coming in, Isabella revealed that they had just been married by the parson who was a passenger in the coach. Macahone, the Irishman (who had 'a mansion in Tipperary for himself and his predecessors after him') had fulfilled his function in the plot by being a witness at the wedding. Micher, infuriated, cried that Isabella was disinherited by her mother. But Isabella countered that she had got hold of her papers, which proved otherwise, by extracting them from Micher's luggage. (This neat dénouement was also original with Farquhar.)

So concentrated a little play required only a quarter of the acting time needed by Farquhar's own comedies, and with no change of scene. Whilst Farquhar hammered out his version

of the work during either the summer or the early autumn of 1703, the only assistance which Peter Motteux certainly gave as a 'collaborator', apart from writing one or two little incidental songs, was that being friendly with Thomas Betterton, who dominated the New Theatre, he arranged for the farce to be presented at Lincoln's Inn Fields. In going to the new house, as if to 'change his luck', Farquhar was merely carrying out what he said he would do in his preface to *The Inconstant* – give that house a play. And they were sorely in need of something that was 'light'. The date set for the first performance could not have been later than December 1703, and may well have been a month or more earlier.

When in 1695 Betterton had opened his new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, certain actors from Drury Lane were believed to have gone over to him because Rich had tried to save money by giving big parts to young actors at half salary. Rich in fact was in this subterfuge neither better nor worse than any theatrical manager in history. Betterton himself was being not guiltless of the same thing, and since a majority of the leading players were remaining in Drury Lane, Rich was not disturbed lest his prophecy go amiss that Lincoln's Inn would fail. Betterton, true enough, had started with a glittering success, *Love for Love*, had in due time followed it with *The Provoked Wife* by Vanbrugh, then with *The Mourning Bride* and *The Way of the World* by Congreve. But Congreve had not kept his agreement to provide a play a year, and Vanbrugh had reverted to Drury Lane. Betterton filled in the gap by himself appearing in *Henry IV* and *Measure for Measure*, winning indeed the cheers of London. All in all, however, this record, over eight years of production, had made competition not too severe for Drury Lane.

This was the situation when Farquhar let his playlet go to Betterton. The chief actors cast for it were Barton Booth as Basil and Thomas Doggett – one of Farquhar's old colleagues in Smock Alley days – as Nicodemus. Booth, another recruit from Smock Alley but five years back, was only twenty-three. He was a young man of vibrant voice, stately figure, and gestures which bore the print of nature. Doggett, who 'wore a farce on his face', was of course an older man, was now the

friend of both Cibber and Congreve, had written a play himself, *The Country Wake*, and acted in it, and had in London played to some renown as Ben in *Love for Love*. All the others cast in *The Stage-Coach* were minor: George Pack, originally a singer, as Fetch, Trout as Tom Jolt, and Mrs. Price as Isabella, were £40-a-year actors, against retaining fees of twice as much and more for Booth and Doggett. Here was no galaxy such as had helped Farquhar to celebrity in his earlier works – players like Wilks, Cibber, Powell, Mills, Johnson, Pinkethman, Norris, Mrs. Verbruggen, Mrs. Rogers, most of them in the same play at once. As far as the actual performing might determine the reception of *The Stage-Coach*, it remained principally to see what Farquhar's compatriot and *alter ego*, Barton Booth, could do, with the seasoned support of Doggett setting him off.

Farquhar himself, still embittered by the double disaster to his two plays in one year, 1702, was expecting little from his afterpiece. Because he thought that by a certain stratum of his audience he was hated, he too was rather in hating mood. Whether he, or a friend of his, wrote the prologue to *The Stage-Coach*, the first four lines of it were borrowed from the opening of his old prologue to *The Grove*, Oldmixon's play of 1700, while the last four so reflected Farquhar's present anticipatory feelings that it seems he was resolved not to be taken aback by still another failure. The prologue ended:

‘I’ve known an audience meet here gay and easy,
In humour good as ever here was seen,
And in an hour the house entire has been,
By charms of dullness, murdered with the spleen.’

The adapter-author need not have felt so fatalistic. Not only had he extracted every ounce of hilarity out of La Chapelle's ingenious situations, but he had added so much himself, and put it all into such tripping and natural dialogue, that the first-night spectators approved the piece with uncommon vim and laughter. No scene could have been funnier than that between Micher and Nicodemus, Jolt and the Constable, outside Dolly's door, a scene original with Farquhar:

MICHER: Oh, Nicodemus! We are all undone! The Captain has

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

been here and got away with your mistress into that room, and what they're doing heaven knows.

(Nic. goes to door and listens.)

NIC: Ha! I hear some noise: I hear some noise within. Why don't you break the door, uncle?

MICH: Why don't you?

NIC: She's your niece.

MICH: She's your wife that must be.

NIC: I can't tell that now.

MICH: Then let's have a constable.

NIC: Ay, ay, a constable, a constable.

JOLT: I'll run call up my landlord; he's a constable. . . .

CON: Here, where are these people? Bring 'em before me.

NIC: Ah, dear sir, I'm glad you are come. Here, here, in that room.

CON: Come out here! I charge you to come out. I am an officer. What – won't you come out, in the Queen's name? Why, then, stay there, in the devil's name. Break open the door. *(Jolt breaks it.)* Why don't you go in now?

JOLT: Why don't you go in? You are an officer.

CON: Then I charge you to go in before me.

JOLT: Let the Squire go in. 'Tis his business.

NIC: Let my Uncle go in. 'Tis more his business than mine.

MICH: Come, we'll all go in. Though he be a Captain, he's but one.

NIC: Ay, ay, we'll all go in.

(They all go in.)

La Chapelle had quite neglected to bring out the timidity of these characters at the door, and thus lost much of the humour, as well as characterization, inherent in the scene. But Farquhar came even more into his own with the dénouement, which he himself invented, entering as Captain Basil the hero in his nightgown, amidst the wrangle at Dolly's door:

BAS: What's the meaning of all this noise? A man can't sleep for you.

NIC: Ah, my dear friend, stand by me now; who should be

MARGARET PEMELL

- here but that same damned rogue of a Captain that we talked of, and has run away with my mistress.
- BAS: The devil he did! and how will you use him when he is found?
- NIC: Use him! I'll pump him, I'll souse him, flea him, carbonade him, and eat him alive.
- BAS: But harkee, sir, don't make such a noise; you'll disturb my wife.
- NIC: What, sir, are you married?
- BAS: Married, and bedded too, since I saw you.
- NIC: To whom?
(*Enter Isabella and the rest.*)
- BAS: To this lady, sir.
- NIC: Uncle!
- MICH: Nephew!
- NIC: Speak you, sir; you are the older man.
- MICH: Married, say you! It cannot be; how could you be married so suddenly?
- BAS: Very luckily, sir. We intended, indeed, to have done it more decently. But my blockhead dropt the key, and being stopt that way, we saw a light in the parson's chamber that travelled with me; we went up, found him smoking his pipe. He first gave us his blessing, and then lent us his bed.

As La Chapelle had tamely let the lovers take flight in the ordinary way as planned, this was Farquhar at his inventive best. The audience at the New Theatre gave no few signs of acknowledging it, Booth and Doggett being able to carry the rest of the cast to a highly agreeable performance.

The epilogue to this farce was not original. Farquhar coolly appropriated for it a prologue of an old play by Thomas Goffe called *The Careless Shepherdess*. Either Farquhar or Motteux made a few alterations, improving some lines, lopping off others, adding others, and omitting words like 'shepherdess' which would betray the source. Goffe had died in 1629. His play, acted before King Charles I and Queen Henrietta at Salisbury Court in 1638, had been published in 1656. Why had Farquhar, in the year after his luckless wedding, been looking into Goffe? The history of

that ill-fated clergyman reveals an arresting coincidence. He had been inveigled into marrying a widow (with children) who pretended to have fallen in love with his preaching. But she and her children so persecuted poor Goffe that within a short time subsequent to his marriage the wretched man was lying on his death-bed, and since an Oxford friend, Tom Thimble, had predicted this very result of the match, Goffe's last words were, 'Oracle, oracle, Tom Thimble!'

However, it so happened that certain of the forty-eight lines in the prologue trimly fitted not only the circumstances of the writing of *The Stage-Coach*, but expressed Farquhar's own resentment of the critics of *The Twin Rivals*. The original began:

'When first this toy was public, 'twas unknown
To th'Author, and before 'twas feathered flown.'

Farquhar simply changed 'toy was public' to 'farce was acted', and the verses applied equally well to *The Stage-Coach*. Then the old prologue read on:

'He knows there is a snarling sect i' the town,
That do condemn all wit, except their own;
Were this play ne'er so good, it should not take;
Nothing must pass that gentlemen do make.'

With the single change of the word 'play' to 'farce', these lines went into the epilogue verbatim, as a little barb flung by Farquhar at his detractors. Further verses in the original, by the dozen, suffered no change at all. To conclude the whole, Farquhar appended two lines of his own:

'In short, be pleased or not, he begs no fame;
He sought your mirth, more than a poet's name.'

Thus he set down his indifference. Nor did he regard with too much gravity the achievement of adapting from the French a short farce, coupling with it for an epilogue the theft of an English prologue. Seeking the mirth of the playgoers, he collected it, for they came in sufficient numbers to Lincoln's Inn Fields to ensure a run of ten nights, a better showing for a playlet than for a full-length comedy. What Farquhar personally collected, in addition, as the author's share of the takings, was also quite useful, enough to help

him through a somewhat meagre and dubious first year as a husband. It is said that *The Stage-Coach* was produced when Farquhar had been 'about a twelvemonth married'.

But English drama, as well, gained something, and it owed that gain in the first instance to Robert Wilks. By suggesting to Farquhar this particular play of La Chapelle's, Wilks deflected the dramatic genius of Farquhar from town to country. Farquhar had already shown a tendency not to limit his dialogue to London: he had brought in Ireland, Paris, Hungary, Rome, Holland, the Continental Wars. This extension of geography was itself new for his time. But now he had planted the very scene elsewhere in England, and put colour into it. By so doing he had struck rather a blow at the coffee-house set, at marital obliquity, at the decaying wits of the Restoration. The wits were yet hardly aware of what George Farquhar had dealt them; he himself was even less aware of it.

CHAPTER XIV

LIEUTENANT FARQUHAR OF THE *Grenadiers*

IT was in the season of 1697-98 that one W. M., a pitiless playwright, had lampooned in a comedy three readily recognizable ladies of London; he tossed a prude into the company of a whore and a glutton. But this array of accomplishment alone would not have set the trio upon the stage. The ladies had pretensions to intellect; and that was unpardonable. Through the last days of the seventeenth century the combination of brains and femininity was not seemly, not the fashion, and the men objected. London liked this scurrilous play at least enough to yield the author his benefit nights; it was acted 'six times without intermission'.

The victims in the comedy, called *The Female Wits*, were Catherine Trotter, who even professed to understand Greek; Mary de la Rivière Manley, who lured and discarded lovers faster than the moon waxed and waned; and Mary Pix, the gourmande, who was vastly fat, and a cistern for wine. Like Mrs. Trotter, the two Marys in this oddly assorted cluster wrote plays, sometimes anonymous, sometimes under a man's name, but always in fear of the prejudice which the other sex nursed against women of parts. Under the jibes of W. M. the taunted authoresses winced, indeed; but they did not desist; they went on turning out plays for years.

Mrs. Pix, whom the play represented as Mrs. Wellfed, was 'excellently' impersonated by Powell's wife, padded out, a sort of sister of Falstaff, a lady who 'would not suffer martyrdom rather than take off three bumpers in a hand'.

LIEUTENANT FARQUHAR OF THE GRENADIERS

Everybody knew this was bibulous Mary. Devoid of learning, actually the wife of a merchant tailor, she was another of those women ten years older than George Farquhar, like Margaret Pemell and Susanna Carroll. But she would write plays, and the managers put them on as if they were afraid not to. Her tragedies are described as 'intolerable', and none of her comedies as better than 'passable'. Since there is little evidence that any of them tormented the stage long enough to earn her a benefit, it is probable that Mary Pix levied hard upon the merchant tailor for her wine and her fatness.

Late in the year 1703, when Lincoln's Inn Fields was grievously failing to attract audiences for tragedy, Mrs. Pix, in a wild attempt to cater to public preference, produced a comedy which she dubbed *The Different Widows: or, Intrigue All-A-Mode*. It was published without her name in December. Its importance is purely that its prologue contained the first comment upon the initial run of *The Stage-Coach*.

Mrs. Pix bewailed the refusal of playgoers to give their patronage to Lincoln's Inn Fields for tragedy, not even for 'poor Monimia'. (The heroine of Otway's *Orphan* was in these days constantly alluded to as symbolic of woman's acme in English tragedy, though later in the eighteenth century she relinquished that eminence, for good, to Lady Macbeth.) But it was comedy that audiences now demanded, comedy that *A Trip to the Jubilee* had made fashionable, comedy, if not farce, that the soldiers back from the wars craved for relaxation, and if Betterton did not give it them, Christopher Rich at the other house would. In consequence, Lincoln's Inn had tried *The Stage-Coach*, and now Mary Pix, for her part abandoning tragedy, was attempting to attune her efforts to the times by reverting to comedy herself. Thus the prologue to *The Different Widows* voiced the objection of the returned troops, together with the remedial measures, in terms of George Farquhar, on the part of managers and authors at Lincoln's Inn Fields:

'"Damn tragedies!" says one, "I hate the strain.
I got a surfeit of 'em last campaign.
Come: prithee, let's be gone to Drury Lane."
Thither in crowds ye flocked to see Sir Harry,

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Or any fop drest All-a-Mode de Paris,
So 'twas but droll it never could miscarry.
Finding your palates so much out of taste,
We fairly ventured for a lucky cast,
And wit being grown by prohibition scarce,
Regaled you here too with an Irish farce.
'Twas farce, and therefore pleased you for a while,
Our Teague and Nicodemus made you smile. . . .'

This was praise perhaps a bit better than faint, though not a great deal better. Wishing to dispose of Farquhar's playlet in favour of her own comedy, the obese Mrs. Pix went on to suggest that *The Stage-Coach* had now 'grown stale'. Sad to say, that did not help her. *The Different Widows* suffered the usual infant mortality of its author's works. In the ensuing weeks, into the new year of 1704, Lincoln's Inn Fields desperately went on to produce or revive one comedy after another, but found it expedient, as early as February 2, to arrange for a second run of *The Stage-Coach*. It was billed as 'the last new farce', a billing which indicated its production previously. This time it came as an after-piece to a revival of *The Country Wit*, by John Crowne, and one can only say that on this occasion Farquhar's little work exhibited a freshness hardly anticipated by the imputation of Mary Pix.

Within about a month after these renewed performances a piece of timely luck befell George Farquhar in the light of his anxious obligation to provide for a wife and two step-children. The Duke of Ormonde, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, commissioned him a Lieutenant of Grenadiers. It is not certain just what steps led to this appointment, other than that Farquhar is reported to have 'made interest to procure a lieutenancy'. There is no evidence that he was at the time personally acquainted with the great Duke, who a year before had commanded the forces against Spain, and in the autumn had come home the hero of Vigo. But it is notable that the regiment to which Farquhar was ordered to report had for its Colonel his old friend Charles Boyle, now Earl of Orrery, and it is said that Robert Wilks had reminded Orrery of Farquhar's need.

Since Boyle had not prospered in playwriting, he wished to distinguish his earldom in some other sphere. He had a friend at Court in the person of Robert Harley, Secretary of

State for the Northern Department, and in March 1704 the new Earl got a Colonel's commission, by which authority he was to raise a regiment of foot. Orrery was partial to literary acquaintance. Further, it was somewhat the fashion for writers of popular plays to become army officers; there were Captain John Vanbrugh, and Captain Richard Steele. Orrery and Farquhar were of about the same age, and congenial; Farquhar had shown his liking for officers of the Army, and some knowledge of their ways, by developing two characters who were officers, Trueman in *The Twin Rivals*, and now Basil in *The Stage-Coach*. But Orrery loved the gay character of Farquhar himself as much as he esteemed his talent, and it is clear that the circumstances attendant upon the commissioning of Farquhar point to an application from Orrery to Ormonde; it was a request, and yet a part of routine that Army regulations required.

The name of Farquhar was already honoured in the Army Lists. Ten years before, Robert Farquhar had joined Colonel George Lauder's regiment of foot. In 1702, Francis Farquhar had been made an Ensign in the Earl of Donegal's regiment of foot in Ireland. Again, a younger member of the family, Hugh Farquhar, was soon to be identified with Lord Mark Kerr's regiment at Windsor. Any or all of these Farquhars (Francis being the most likely) were possibly either brothers or near cousins to George, whose candidacy, in the eyes of the Duke of Ormonde, would not suffer therefrom.

Contemporary comment upon this departure in the career of Farquhar was soon to follow. He had only to produce a new play, let alone become a soldier, to stir up the wasps of critics, who begrudged him even the reasonable success which *The Stage-Coach* had won. Yet it was not merely a case of Farquhar being singled out. Some nuisance or other like Daniel Kendrick, remembered for his attack on Farquhar four years earlier in *A New Session of Poets, Occasion'd by the Death of Dryden*, was always pitching satire at the poets in general, and this present satirist simply went at Farquhar along with the rest, not only pecking at his 'foreign' origin, but commenting upon any points topical. Not seldom the writers of verses of such a nature, despairing

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

of success for themselves as either dramatist or poet, had become partisans of the French and Italian players who had so encroached upon the London theatre; this bias the versifiers proceeded to exercise by depreciating their own authors, especially those who had won success. In the satire which in this spring of 1704 got into print, called rather repetitiously *The Trial of Skill, Or A New Session of the Poets*, the writer followed a scheme of summoning the poets into the Court of Apollo and challenging their pretensions. When the case of Farquhar came before the judges, he was made to retort:

'Is it so, then?' said Farquhar, 'My matters are safe.
By Saint Patrick, my business is done;
For 'tis known I have made pit and gallery laugh
Without anyone's help but my own.'

'My Jubilee Dicky and airy Sir Harry
Will vindicate what I have said;
And none but myself has a title to carry
The laurels away on my head.'

To which the shades responded:

'By your leave, brother Teague,' replied MacFlecknoe's
[Shadwell's] ghost,
'Our countrymen are better known;
The beauties are borrowed of which you thus boast;
But the faults, I dare swear, are your own.'

'Though the town may allow what you'd have 'em all take
For granted, with no one you join,
Since none but a man of your judgment could make
Such language to such a design.'

'And I can't but applaud the resolve you have ta'en,
In the present employ which you choose,
For it's nobler in red to make a campaign
Than to butcher an innocent Muse.'

This was by way of wishing well to Lieutenant Farquhar as he took up his military career, a parting salute from the sort of quat who in 1700 had feared, at that time also with the voice of Apollo,

'That it would much disgrace the throne of wit,
If there an Irish deputy should sit . . .'



THE RECRUITING OFFICER

Act I, Scene 1. The Market-place in Shrewsbury

Sergeant



THE BEAU'S STRATAGEM

Act II, Scene 1. Amwell feigning illness at Lady Bountiful's



George Farquhar presented by his master, Ben Jonson,
at the Court of Apollo and the Nine Muses

But whatever the consequences of Farquhar's relations with the Muse, he was not absenting himself from her for the moment because of any jests made by the tribe of Kendricks. His lieutenancy paid him £54 15s. od. per annum. It was fortunate enough to a husband who had unexpectedly found no fortune in his wife, and while the sum was less than an author like Farquhar might get out of a benefit performance of a play, it did go reasonably far toward keeping his new household until he should be able to produce another comedy. Not the ghost of Thomas Shadwell was it that perturbed Farquhar; if any spirit in these days broke the peace of his dreams it was rather that of Thomas Goffe, caged, prodded, tormented, by that widow and children. Financial alleviation was perhaps only one of the reasons why Farquhar went into soldiering.

Due note of the matrimonial trap into which he had fallen was made by another writer of the day. In June of this year died in Aldersgate Street the scurrilous Tom Brown, satirist of the coffee-houses, the man of 'facetious memory', and they buried him in the Abbey near his friend Aphra Behn. Tom, at forty-one, knew he was going to die, and he 'took his leave in metre'. This appeared in an appendix to *Memoirs Relating to the Late Famous Mr. Thomas Brown, with a Catalogue of his Library*, 1704. Brown in his leave-taking averred that upon dying he found no room in heaven for the Sons of Parnassus, and he had to go to Elysium. It seemed to be a private British Elysium, wherein all writers were 'damned to write on', and 'not get for whole pages one mouthful of praise'. In order that his surviving brethren of the pen might avoid this disaster, and escape Elysium in favour of heaven, Brown admonished them. 'Let Congreve reform,' he said, and

'Let Vanbrugh no more plotless plays e'er impose,
 Stuft with satire and smut to ruin the house . . .
 Bid Dennis drink less, but bid him write better;
 Bid Durfey cease scribbling, that libelling songster . . .
 Bid Baker and Cibber, those wits of the age,
 Ne'er expose a dull coxcomb but just on the stage;
 Bid Farquhar, tho' bit, to his consort be just,
 And Motteux in his office be true to his trust . . .
 Bid Keen leave stealing as well as the rest;
 When this can be done, they may hope to be blest.'

Embodied in this exhortation, as it applied to Farquhar, there was enough to indicate that at least one of his contemporaries was hardly sympathetic with Farquhar's connubial plight. Farquhar was 'bit'. Indeed, Tom Brown had been wondering just how long George would remain steadfast to the wily Margaret. As to Brown's next reference, to Farquhar's colleague Peter Motteux, this had nothing to do with Farquhar, but alluded to the fact that in the previous year Motteux had been appointed clerk in the foreign department of the Post Office. Tom Brown was nothing if not topical. At all events the case of Mr. and Mrs. George Farquhar in the months of uncertainty subsequent to their surprising marriage was on the authority of Brown obvious gossip in the coffee-houses.

The new Lieutenant, with a spouse of doubtful ready capital, to say nothing of a pair of stepchildren, was hungrily in need not only of the guinea a week which the Army furnished. He needed more, and that without waiting. In this state of mind it was that he decided to revisit Dublin. One account has it that the purpose was 'to see his friends'; but it is more credibly added that he sought a subscription to his collected *Works*. With half a dozen plays now produced in London, five of which were in print separately, Farquhar may justly have believed that he had done enough writing, and gained enough renown, to warrant a complete edition in a single volume. Yet the London booksellers, to all appearance, did not quite agree to such an undertaking; could they tempt the public with a book of comedies in which only one, the *Jubilee*, had gained genuine popularity?

But George Farquhar had in Dublin a brother who was 'in the trade'. Peyton Farquhar, having at the time George left Dublin in 1697 been apprentice to Jacob Miller the stationer, had grown semi-prosperous in his occupation. Completing his apprenticeship in 1701, in which year Miller died, he was now a 'stationer of Dublin', though he held no office in the Dublin Guild of Cutlers, Painter-Stainers, and Stationers. His status was that of journeyman stationer, under which designation he was not entitled to keep shop. Of the two employments open to him, Peyton could be either a working bookbinder or a foreman in the shop of a free stationer.'

LIEUTENANT FARQUHAR OF THE GRENADIERS

He is said to have been located in Castle Street, where at this time there were only two booksellers: Thomas Servant, a poor man, who was certainly his own manager; and Eliphah Dobson, at the Stationer's Arms. Dobson was perhaps the wealthiest of the dealers in books, a man who liked to play the country gentleman at Dundrum, County Dublin, whenever his business permitted. Coincidences indicate that he was the employer of Peyton Farquhar: since Dobson's own son was too young to take charge, the father needed a resident manager; again, when Jacob Miller's widow married a glover in 1702, the Guild allowed Miller's apprentice to select another master, and he chose Dobson; the boy is more likely to have been acquainted with Farquhar, once at Miller's, than with the great Dobson, and if Farquhar was on the staff of Dobson, that circumstance may well have determined the choice of the apprentice.

The interest of these tangential points is that except in one particular they tend to confirm the legend, hitherto unsupported, that George Farquhar went to stay 'in the house of his brother the bookseller in Castle Street'. Peyton Farquhar had not reached the eminence of bookseller. Yet he might in a publishing way be of use. No doubt George, soon after he had picked up enough threads which he had left for seven years dangling, did set out to 'see his friends' in the town, in the College, in Smock Alley, from all of whom he must as a dramatist of mark have received a loquacious and admiring Hibernian welcome. But when he ventured to hint business to them, to intimate their subscriptions for his *Collected Works*, he did not quite prosper. These good folk possibly already possessed copies of one or more of his plays, parcels of which had been sent over from London singly on publication, and Farquhar, sad to relate, failed to glean the encouragement which he had counted upon. The natural thing for him then to do would have been to consult once more with his brother, if not with Eliphah Dobson.

There remained *The Stage-Coach*, which nobody had read because it had not been published in London. Even without a subscription, it was a fair risk for the booksellers. Farquhar was able to arrange for its printing, and the copy-money he got for that little play would at least pay the expenses of

his visit. Until July 1704, as it happened, Eliphaz Dobson was Master of his Guild. By all the trades represented in it he was liked and respected. If he wished to indulge his principal journeyman, Peyton Farquhar, by allowing him to publish a play, no one in the Guild would be apt to object. No doubt Peyton was the agent who got the business done. It does not follow that he would have put his name on the title-page; nor did he. When the pamphlet appeared, that page read, at the bottom, 'Dublin: Printed, and are to be Sold by the Booksellers, 1704. Price 4d.' It contained no dedication, being the first of Farquhar's plays to lack that ornament of so dubious a value.

But the needy dramatist and husband had not returned to his old haunts merely for the love of them. Money he must have, and upon conferring with his friends as to the best course to take, he 'was advised' to seek a benefit performance at Smock Alley. The totality of his fame had preceded his arrival, the public were now reading his latest play, and he had at least come back to Dublin a better dramatist than he had gone away an actor. If his circle of acquaintance had balked at a subscription, that was no reason to believe they would refuse to help him out at the theatre, scene of the start of his career.

In the Alley, Farquhar put the proposal to his old friend Ashbury, who even now, at sixty-six, not only remained manager, but was one of the favourite actors. Ashbury readily consented to a special benefit performance of Farquhar's most popular play, the *Jubilee*, and moreover, invited the author himself to play the part of Sir Harry Wildair. But had not George Farquhar sworn, after he had put his sword through Price in that unfortunate episode in *The Indian Emperor*, never to act again? At any rate, what good was he as an actor? Was not his voice thin? Had he not lacked gusto, self-assurance, confidence? Had he not failed, in the old Smock Alley days, to rouse the galleries? Why could he not take the benefit (needing it more grievously than he dared own) without the appearance?

However, when seven years earlier Farquhar had bade farewell to this company and left for London, Ashbury had in token of appreciation given him a 'free benefit' perform-

* LIEUTENANT FARQUHAR OF THE GRENADIERS

ance. Now the same theatre wished to signalize the young man's return to his old colleagues, wished to commemorate his achievement in the greater calling of dramatist, by no less a testimonial, and to add emphasis to the occasion by putting the author himself into the cast. When it came to estimating how far the quality of curiosity would attract an audience, Ashbury was a shrewd judge. It would be ungracious in Farquhar not to revoke, just this once, his solemn pledge against acting. He agreed to play.

As an officer in Lord Orrery's regiment of foot, Lieutenant Farquhar had to get leave, before appearing on the stage, of the Duke of Ormonde, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Ormonde, 'a fine gentleman, an expansive man', was now about forty; he was munificent, gracious, lofty-spirited, and High Church. If politically he was rather insignificant, militarily he was at the moment a great figure, having commanded the forces against Spain and come home in 1702 the hero of Vigo. Although Farquhar as a subaltern had yet seen no service, he could still go to the Duke as one officer to another. The result of their interview was that Ormonde not only gave the Lieutenant the desired permission to act, but promised to attend the benefit himself.

On the night of the play, an experience unique for audience and author alike, Smock Alley, down there between Fishamble Street and Essex Gate, drew a crowd, not the least of whom, among the younger fry, stormed in through the arched passage and the lane that led from Trinity College. As homage to a dramatist of repute, as a burst of hospitality to a distinguished young man of Dublin, the evening was memorable. How would George Farquhar acquit himself, once more on the stage of his fledgling efforts? Even if he had not rounded into much of an actor in his playing days eight years before, his admirers rather expected him to know all there was to know about a part he had actually written, a part which they doubtless believed to be both the embodiment of his own personality and a reflection of no little of his own 'debauched' life in London.

The gods decreed otherwise. However much Farquhar might *be* Sir Harry Wildair, at least before he married the widow Pemell and her brood, he could but ill behave like

him in front of a packed and curious audience eagerly assembled to do him honour. That he could not appear at ease even in the scene at Lady Darling's, which Wildair mistook for a brothel, may have been to the credit of one so recently reputed a rake. But he is said to have 'failed greatly' in his performance, to have made his friends 'blush to see him' in the part, indeed to have 'murdered his own Sir Harry Wildair on the Dublin stage'. That sounded bad, almost worse than impaling Price on his sword. The only thing Farquhar could have pleaded in defence, at the end, was that he did not pretend to be an actor. A weak corollary was that even if he so pretended, he did not know his present supporting company; the players whose ways he was really familiar with were all in London.

But this mischance, after all, was a secondary matter. The solidly gratifying aspect of so big an occasion in Farquhar's life – honoured by the presence of the Duke of Ormonde, the Lord-Lieutenant, a General who might one day do a fellow-officer, not an actor, still another good turn – was that the benefit yielded the author £100, a sum which 'far exceeded anything that had ever been known in Dublin'. The event, if not his acting, bespoke an impressive welcome home.

His benefit softened the chagrin of his failure to get his *Works* published. After all, if he had been able to bring out that book, would he have received as much for it as the theatre gave him? Even if he had got his usual copy-money of £15 per play, the total would hardly have amounted to as much as that one night of resurgent stage-fright in Smock Alley. However he had come by his hundred pounds, Dublin had certainly given him more than London had offered at the moment of his departure from the metropolis, and he had renewed old friendships, published *The Stage-Coach*, and achieved what he set forth to do: essentially to allay his financial alarm.

Lieutenant Farquhar in consequence left Ireland, grateful for his gains, and meditating his future perhaps more as an Army officer than as a dramatist. Even the appearance in this year, 1704, of lovely Anne Oldfield in the part of Lady Lurewell, and her popular hit in it as a highly competent

LIEUTENANT FARQUHAR OF THE GRENADIERS

successor to Mrs. Verbruggen, did not at the moment inspire Farquhar to further dramatic writing. Yet he could not have been uninterested in seeing that this girl, whose born talent he had detected and insisted upon when she was a child of fifteen, was now at the age of twenty-one blooming into one of the two or three leading actresses of London 'beautiful without artifice', and 'her address and conversation engaging without affectation'. It was possibly Farquhar's misfortune that Anne Oldfield had not hitherto been given a chance in one of his plays at its first showing, as it had certainly been his luck that Robert Wilks had.

The Lieutenant put away writing, it appears, because he expected orders this summer for his regiment to join forces with the Duke of Marlborough's troops on their march to the Danube. But the orders did not materialize. Another expectation may also have detained Farquhar in London: it was probably before the end of this year that his wife lay in. She gave birth to a daughter, and the child was christened Anne Marguerite. How was her father to sustain this addition to a family already costly beyond any calculations he could possibly envisage? One thing Farquhar could now do, in the light of the good sale of *The Stage-Coach* in Ireland: he could bring out a London imprint of his farce. It was published in 1705, this time with a dedication.

The man to whom Farquhar inscribed his playlet, Samuel Bagshaw, he called 'a noble friend', who bestowed 'noble patronage'. Bagshaw had 'ability of judgment', as well as (the usual dedicatory garnishing) 'fame for piety and love to his country', and was one who had 'equally balanced his actions in these distempered times' to the admiration of all. *The Stage-Coach* itself the author spoke of as 'naked of worth'.

How could Farquhar find fault with his critics for disparaging him when he so stigmatized his own play? He was still rankling over the shabby reception they had given to *The Inconstant* and to *The Twin Rivals*. He had the long memory of the Irish, not the resilience of the English, with regard to ill-treatment in the past. The rest of his dedication he devoted to resentment of his detractors, quite neglecting the reasonably favourable impression created by *The Stage-*

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Coach at Lincoln's Inn Fields. They had assailed him with 'black-mouth obloquy'. Such detraction and calumnies he called 'brats of ignorance'. The answer to it, as Francis Bacon was his witness, was that he who had no virtue in himself ever envied it in others.

A philippic of this vehemence must have indicated that Farquhar was suffering, more than any other record of the time reveals, from prolonged attacks by playgoers of some influence, and also by readers who did not spare their denunciations. However, in addressing Bagshaw he took some comfort in comparing his plight with that of his master Ben Jonson. Farquhar 'gloried' in resembling Jonson to the extent that both had to withstand the buffets of the illiterate, 'the silken wits of the time'. The difference was that Jonson had been able to laugh them down with his 'incomparable' play *The Poetaster*. Apart from this one resemblance, in point of buffets, Farquhar, 'a petty inconsiderable star', did not expect to be named with 'that glorious sun', who shed such 'piercing rays of wit and judgment'.

When Farquhar was on the defensive with his pen he seemed to lose sense of literary form and coherence. His enemies needed only to point to this dedication and say that in the same paragraph in which his interminable sentences smothered the critics with epithets, he proved merely that the critics were right because he simultaneously decried both himself and his play. By Farquhar's own measurement, he had 'weak abilities', while Ben Jonson had enjoyed 'heavenly endowments'. Of course the true appraisal of the work of Farquhar, even in 1705, though it may have been held by a minority – judges like Robert Wilks, who were not so vociferous – was well above the 'obloquy' which the sensitive young dramatist took so hard. Whatever his standing was, it seemed to him for a full year not sound enough to impel him to attempt another play.

Yet the Lieutenant had little time this year to brood upon his dramatic outlook. Not being sent to the Continent, he was ordered to proceed into the countryside, to Lichfield and to Shrewsbury, 'on recruiting duty. It was a part of England quite unknown to him, though his friend Henry

Bret – the M.P. for Bishop's Castle, Salop – who was also a Lieutenant-Colonel in a foot regiment raised in this same year by Sir Charles Hotham, might be helpful by way of introducing Farquhar round the neighbourhood.

The young subaltern found Lichfield somewhat battered from the fighting which had occurred there during the Civil Wars. Its cathedral had then suffered severe damage, since its authorities were for the King, while the townsfolk sided with Parliament. The bishop's palace, even now, was not occupied by the bishops, who had withdrawn to Eccleshall. In the palace was living the eccentric Lord Stanhope, heir to that old rake of the Restoration, the second Earl of Chesterfield. Stanhope, not a military man, was more devoted to falconry than fighting. But the city was a likely centre for recruits. Picturesque with old half-timbered houses, it lay in a pleasant country, on a small stream flowing eastward to the Trent, with low hills in that direction and to the south. Its fair held on Ash Wednesday, its annual fête and pageant on Whit-Monday, and its teeming market days every Tuesday and Friday, all these drew rustics in from the villages and farms, not a few of whom might have small hope of escaping Lieutenant Farquhar and his wheedling men.

Putting up at the old George Inn, in Bird Street on the London road, an inn which had stood there in Shakespeare's day, Farquhar quickly made himself friendly with its landlord, John Harrison, with whom progress in acquaintance was imperative because Harrison possessed an irresistible daughter. But the recruiting officer was not limited to those he met by chance. Lichfield returned two members to Parliament; one of them, Sir Michael Biddulph, Bt., possibly in consequence of an introduction from Colonel Henry Bret, very hospitably invited Farquhar to his country house at Elmhurst, a small hamlet about a mile north of the city. Biddulph, now a man in his early sixties, had been twice married. He had a houseful of girls. Five of his six children were daughters, of whom the two by the first wife, Susannah and Charlotte, having not long turned twenty, formed an additional reason for the visiting Lieutenant to devote rather less than his entire time to the Army of the Queen.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Although Farquhar was diligent upon his own business, he made himself agreeable enough to Sir Michael and Lady Biddulph to be asked to spend considerable of his leisure in their company. In due course he found he was quite as much entertained by a humorous servant of the family, one Thomas Bond, aged twenty-eight, as by his hostess or her stepdaughters. But the guest did not try to enlist the footman. It was perhaps not always at Elmhurst – a great T-shaped house with a sunken garden in front – that the Lieutenant saw his new friends. All of the local landed proprietors, the Dyotts, the Biddulphs, and others, had their 'town houses' in Lichfield, and in Sadler Street, not far from the inn at which Farquhar lodged, stood the house of Sir Michael Biddulph, built half a century earlier by his grandfather, who in keeping with the distinction of his family had embellished certain of its rooms with fine Jacobean panelling. The milieu into which Lieutenant Farquhar had progressed was hardly of a nature to make him pine for London.

Indeed, French officers who were prisoners in Lichfield were alone enough to afford him ample diversion. It was in this year of 1705 that there was published a twelve-page folio of anonymous verse, *A Trip to Lichfield, with a Character of the French Officers there*. In terms not unfamiliar to George Farquhar the writer first described himself:

'That night to arrive pretty late at my inn,
Where having a furious temptation to sin,
I used all efforts my young hostess to move,
And warmly attacked her with vigorous love.'

He then went on to the French:

'And faith by their gayety it hard to be seen was,
Whose fetters they wore, Bellona's or Venus,
Nor did it appear in their mien nor their air
They'd any concern at the fortune of war.'

The visit of Farquhar to Lichfield was no such complete lark. Yet his recruiting task, in which he was ably assisted by a Welshman, Sergeant Jones, a convenient man to have at work near the Welsh border, was made the easier by the Mutiny and Impressment Acts of 1703-5. These acts empowered Justices of the Peace 'to raise and levy such able-bodied men as have not any lawful calling or employment, or

visible means for their maintenance and livelihood, to serve as soldiers'. A memoir (in French) upon the Art of War, published some years later, was more specific as to the scheme in everyday use in various countries: 'Troops are raised either by voluntary engagement or by capitulation; sometimes too by compulsion, but most commonly by artifice. . . . The method of raising troops by artifice is likewise altogether scandalous and unwarrantable; such, among other instances, as that of secretly putting money into a man's pocket, and afterwards challenging him for a soldier'.

It did not take George Farquhar long to dip into this bag of tricks. His commanding officer and friend, Lord Orrery, in due time discovered that the new Lieutenant was 'very serviceable both in raising and recruiting', but feared that this eagerness was 'to the great prejudice of his own family'. It seemed that Farquhar was spending his own funds, which he had brought back from Dublin, not so much in paying bills incurred by Margaret, but in getting recruits after the approved fashion, with Sergeant Jones 'secretly putting money into a man's pocket'. Meantime Mrs. Farquhar in London, with her trio of progeny including his own infant, Anne Marguerite, was having a thin time of it. Farquhar, of course, may have reckoned that present expenditure in aid of a big enrollment would expedite his promotion to a captaincy, with nearly double the pay (£100 7s. 6d. per annum), which would in the long run be so much the better for his dependents. He took the risk. At all events, Lord Orrery regarded him 'a person of great ingenuity'.

Both the Earl of Orrery and the Duke of Ormonde were now engaged in exercises in the vicinity of Shrewsbury. The Duke had in this year of 1705 left Ireland, in disfavour – having ruled slackly and let his subordinates peculate – had come over to England, and taken command of his Second Troop of Life Guards. Upon Farquhar, busy in Lichfield and soon to divide his time in Shrewsbury, the presence of two friendly and influential noblemen nearby, both of them in Army life and both aware of his abilities in authorship as well as in gathering up men for the forces, was not lost.

This critical year did more than provide the Lieutenant with 'regular employment', a thing itself quite new in his

life. In his public career he was less fortunate than his compeers Vanbrugh and Congreve, men who could cavalierly shake off the theatre, since the one had his architecture and the other always held sinecures from the Government. Yet Farquhar, with at least his subsistence in the Army, was finding something that kindled and enlivened his young mind to new enjoyment of living: a fresh point of view. If in *The Stage-Coach* he had shifted his scene from town to country, he had now made that shift in his life itself. Shakespeare, as in the case of Iago, thought that the age of twenty-eight marked a high point in a man's intellectuality. Farquhar was now twenty-eight. He was met with increased necessity to make use of all his wits. Within about a year of the birth of his child Anne Marguerite, another daughter was born to him. The new infant was named Mary.

Having received orders to proceed from Lichfield to Shrewsbury, Farquhar left with Sergeant Jones and his other aides for the new scene of his recruiting, forty miles to the west. On arrival, he put up at The Raven, famous as the best inn of the town. It was a black-and-white house, its arched entrance to the inn yard bearing for its sign the black raven of the Corbets. Everyone knew whom the sign called to mind: Sir John Corbet, who had died in the early years of the Restoration; a patriot of Shropshire, at one time High Sheriff, and a Cromwell man.

While he was standing on historic ground, very near where Hotspur three centuries before was slain, Farquhar could hardly identify his territory with the recruiting by Falstaff of Wart, Feeble, and Shadow, the bribery wrung from Mouldy and Bullcalf. That legendary spot lay fifty miles or more to the south, over the border in Gloucestershire. None the less, Farquhar in whatever surroundings perceived the worth of his Bardolph in Sergeant Jones.

Topographically the scene had something familiar about it. Shrewsbury had grown mainly on a peninsula formed by the Severn, the feature of the land being a hill of red soil called the Wrekin. This panorama must have recalled Farquhar's schooldays in Derry twenty years earlier: Derry up the river from Lough Foyle, Derry with its great mound, rising upon another peninsula which again a bend in the river

LIEUTENANT FARQUHAR OF THE GRENADIERS

had made. Furthermore, in both towns the houses huddled round a great church: here in Shrewsbury, on a site hallowed even before the Conquest, rose the soaring spire of St. Mary's; in Derry, it was the cathedral of St. Columba, with its Gothic tower. The similarities, indeed, were ample and various enough. George Farquhar, who knew his way about a peninsula, had arrived in Salop with what might be called a landed advantage.

Historic with stone relics of the Plantagenets and timbered houses of Tudor times – old friaries, a shire hall, a guild hall, a drapers' hall, a grammar-school of Edward VI – the peninsula was densely built upon. Its old streets climbed up and curved round quite without plan, through passages under archways, between ancient high mansions, into an open court, or leading to a mediaeval façade. On the isthmus left by the Severn stood the castle, one of the latest of whose parts was its keep, built by Edward I, the king who had here cruelly put to death David, the last of the Welsh princes. Towers of red free-stone, which had originally risen at intervals in the town wall, were mostly gone now. But Council House, one of the glories of Shrewsbury, where the earlier Stuarts had kept Court, remained. It was reached through a gateway of curiously carved oaken pillars, this gate passing under a fine old house with its timber lines marked, and quaint adornments in black paint, until one came into three sides of a square, the Council Chambers, with more entrances arched, bow windows, windows in the roofs, and peaked gables. In another square nearby stood a Market House; it overlooked the grass-banked Severn. The townsmen, in this year of 1705, were putting up a new building in Market Cross, and over its arches a leaden cistern for a reservoir. On Wednesdays and Saturdays – not to conflict with Lichfield – the market place was raucous with buttermen and poulterers, a tempting scene for the wiles of Sergeant Jones. The town of Shrewsbury bore a tradition of hospitality. They had gravelled the streets for the last royal visitor, James II, in the summer of 1687. Drums beat, colours flew, conduits ran with wine, and one Henry Vernon earned a guinea for climbing St. Mary's dizzy steeple and flourishing a flag from it.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Drums were beating again now, round and round the Wrekin, on orders from Lieutenant Farquhar, issued from his quarters in The Raven. He was a perfect stranger, he said, to everything in Salop, except its character of loyalty, the number of its inhabitants (official information for officers), the alacrity of the gentleman in offering to recruit the Army (the local J.P.'s like Justice Shallow), and their generous and hospitable reception of strangers. If this was his experience within a few days of his arrival, the dashing young Farquhar was making a fair start.

As in Lichfield, he had his introductions. He came to know the Depty Recorder, Mr. Francis Berkeley (possibly kin to Sir Robert Berkeley, late High Sheriff in the next county of Worcestershire). The acquaintance did not lag; the Recorder had an attractive daughter, Miss Laconia Berkeley, aged twenty-three. The Lieutenant also met with another local politician, Mr. John Hill, who had been Mayor in William III's time, and who lived in a stately old house in Hill's Lane. A third gentleman whom Farquhar cultivated was a young Welsh country squire called Mr. Owens (his Christian name was probably Athelstane) of Rhiwsaison, in the adjacent county of Montgomeryshire. Again, the Lieutenant grew acquainted with Mr. Edward Harnage, who lived at Belsadine, near the Wrekin, and who also, like the Recorder, had a daughter, Miss Dorothy Harnage. This lady had arrived at the rather less pursued age of thirty; but she had her points, and one of them was that she was a good deal younger than Mrs. Farquhar, while Farquhar himself was past twenty-eight. In the course of his recruiting rounds the Lieutenant, some distance from a wife on the slope of middle age, was loath to overlook any fair ones who possessed a decided advantage in years. The uniform of a Grenadier had its uses.

It was essential for Farquhar to be on very good terms with the local justices. As seemed to be equally true in the day of Shakespeare, regular officers of the Army were excluded from acting as justices for the enrolment. The Mutiny Acts and the Articles of War, in the time of Queen Anne, had to be read over to the recruit before he was sworn and enrolled. But the Lieutenant prospered in his work. In

LIEUTENANT FARQUHAR OF THE GRENADIERS

due time he came to the view that 'the kingdom could not show better bodies of men, better inclinations for the service, more generosity, more good understanding, nor more politeness than is to be found at the foot of the Wrekin'. Recruiting, he expansively added, which was the greatest fatigue upon earth to others, became – in Shrewsbury – the greatest pleasure in the world to him.

WHAT CAME FROM *Shrewsbury*

THE adventurous year of 1705 was running out. Down in London, at a new theatre in the Haymarket opened only in the previous April, John Vanbrugh was adapting plays. At the end of October he produced *The Confederacy*, embodying a translation of *Le Bourgeois à la Mode*, by Dancourt, the Teniers of comedy. A nimble adapter was Vanbrugh, even now trimming up another, *The Mistake*, which he was fashioning out of Molière's *Dépit amoureux*. This was to be staged as soon as December. The rapidity of Vanbrugh's work recalled a similar feat of his eight years before, when within five months he turned out *The Relapse* and *The Provoked Wife*.

But the only thing which at present was reminding the town of George Farquhar was a single revival of *The Stage-Coach*, also at the Haymarket, in the middle of November. Remote from the theatre, hearing little news of poets or players, preoccupied with his recruiting, did he know of the surprising decision recently taken by this same Vanbrugh: to retire, at the end of the year, from playwriting? Vanbrugh was to give all his talents to the design and building of rich men's houses. This would leave Farquhar, so to speak, in command of the dramatic field, if he wished to seize his chance, since nobody else of consequence was writing plays except Cibber, Nicholas Rowe, and Susanna Carroll, and what they were producing was upon the whole making but a feeble impression.

Whether Farquhar, away in Shrewsbury, at length got wind of this situation and thought of himself as an immediate successor to Vanbrugh does not appear. But he did with no

further ado decide to write an autobiographical comedy from his own recruiting experiences, into which he would weave the country atmosphere of *The Stage-Coach*, but which he would be writing on the spot, out of the living material he had come to know through and through. It should be completed in time to bring it into London on the heels of Vanbrugh's retirement.

The setting for this new play, and the people in it, were ready made, round the Wrekin. 'Some little turns of humour,' said Farquhar, speaking to Salopians of his plan, 'that I met with almost within the shade of that famous hill, gave rise to this comedy'. Not a few in whom he confided feared he was out to ridicule their habitat. He reassured them. 'People were apprehensive,' he said, 'that by the example of some others I would make the town merry at the expense of the country gentlemen: but they forgot that I was to write a comedy, not a libel; and that whilst I held to nature, no person of any character in your country could suffer by being exposed.'

When Farquhar's General, the Duke of Ormonde, heard what his subaltern designed, far from interfering, he encouraged him. The comedy, when finished, was simply to be approved by Lord Orrery, as Colonel of the regiment. Upon this sanction Farquhar, sitting down in his room at The Raven, began to shape his characters and his turns of plot. The window of the room in which he wrote is said to have looked into the inn yard inside the arched entrance. Earlier in his career, when choosing which part he saw himself acting, swaggering and relishing the fun, young Farquhar had played either a rake or a soldier. These he now determined to combine, but to soften the one and sharpen the other, to evolve a rakish recruiting officer. His own life, as marked off on so small a stage as Shrewsbury, enabled him to bring the character of his hero into clearer focus than he had ever before attained. To give the man a bit more dash, Farquhar promoted himself from lieutenant to captain – Captain Plume, a character mercurial, dynamic, good and bad in George Farquhar's own image.

Two strands of action, braided, interwoven, were to run through the play: the actual recruiting and the love motives.

Farquhar and Jones, impersonated by Plume and Sergeant Kite, were to illustrate the divers methods of ensnaring men, these scenes to unify the play, to lay its keel, in each of its five acts. Having Kite, the author could dispense with the hackneyed character of the servant; Kite himself was a king of servants. The romantic side was to be worked out by three men and two women, each a distinct individual. Farquhar cleverly sketched the utmost contrast of himself both against a civilian and against another recruiting officer. While the civilian, Mr. Worthy, was a lovelorn country gentleman distracted by the fickleness of his beloved, the officer Captain Brazen was a comic poseur who pretended to 'know everybody', got few recruits, and spent his time chasing ladies of fortune. The women, Silvia and Melinda, in equally discernible contrast exemplified constancy and coquetry. Silvia was to be the 'natural' woman, something relatively new in Restoration comedy, the sort of woman by whom Farquhar, now that he had broken out of Covent Garden, was impressed.

These main characters he took locally and bodily from amongst his known friends, except Brazen, who was probably a composite of several fellow-officers. Worthy he modelled upon Mr. Owens of Rhiwsaison. Silvia was Miss Laconia Berkeley, daughter of the Deputy Recorder; and the author made use of her father as well, to be Mr. Ballance, the first of three justices in his list of characters. Another justice he drew from John Hill, of Hill's Lane. Melinda he shaped from Miss Dorothy Harnage of Belsadine, whose house, near the Wrekin, marked her 'a lady of fortune'.

To point up his minor characters, the recruits, Farquhar used every trick known to the game, enriching the comedy by very diversity. He opened with Kite cajoling the yokels, first by a recruiting speech, then by 'a tub of humming ale' in his quarters. Into the second act the author inserted the notorious artifice of inveigling two bumpkins – Costar Pearmain and Thomas Appletree – to accept two gold pieces as 'pictures of the Queen', and then proclaiming the receivers of 'the Queen's money' to be soldiers. (Farquhar, having actually invested money of his own in this way, knew of what he wrote.) When the men protested with a howl, Plume

WHAT CAME FROM SHREWSBURY

stept in and made believe to beat Kite for knavery, with the result that the men enlisted out of admiration for the noble officer.

In the third act Plume and Kite worked a scheme more intricate. A country wench Rose, and her brother Bullock, came on selling chickens and barley. Whilst Kite engaged the brother, Plume got off with the girl to his lodgings, loaded her with trinkets, and sent herself away recruiting for him, to gather in not only her rustic sweethearts, but finally her brother as well. The elaborateness of these stratagems developed in Act IV still further. Kite posed as an astrologer, trapping a smith and a butcher, as he read their palms, by saying that if within an hour or two they followed 'a tall slender gentleman' in the market place – he would be either a collector of excise, a plenipotentiary, or a captain of Grenadiers – he would make their fortune; the smith would at length become 'Captain of the Forges', and the butcher 'Surgeon-General'. Then the final variant on recruiting, in the last act, disclosed bribery and corruption rampant in a Court of Justice. One recruit pretended to support five children; another to be actually married. The Constable had let two more escape on payment of a shilling each above the sum he would have got by handing them over. Mr. Ballance, the justice, ruled that the Constable be held until his friends ransomed him with four good recruits; failing that, the miscreant was to go to Flanders. Out of the whole series of these scenes the racy Captain Plume and the spontaneous Kite emerged not too discredibly.

From the varied record of Kite and his contrivances throughout this comedy it is not to be supposed that the Sergeant was overmuch a copy of Farquhar's man Jones. No doubt Jones like all recruiting staff used forms of most of the tricks written into the play. But for the guile, the humbug, the quackery, above all, the thumping loquacity of this character Farquhar presumably went straight to his exemplar Ben Jonson, whom in the preface to *The Stage-Coach* he had lately called 'that Son of Wit . . . with those rich Gifts of Nature, of which he was Master'. The haranguing manner of Kite, and a great deal more, can all be found in the half dozen pages of prose bombast in the opening scene of Act II

of *Volpone*, at which point 'Volpone disguised as a mountebank Doctor' sets up to sell his 'remedies' to the crowd. But the advance which Farquhar now made upon Jonson lay in a very dextrous breaking-up of most of Kite's speeches to gain a more natural dialogue, a dialogue which developed numerous other characters in pointed contrast as it ran along. Much as Farquhar admired his great predecessors, Fletcher as well as Ben Jonson, he knew by instinct how to modify, in keeping with the changes of his own times, their most lifelike creations.

Interlarded with the recruiting of course the romantic episodes worked their destined way, a way hazardous, hampered, quarrelsome, and unpredictable. A vapourish Melinda, who teased men whether she loved them or whether they wearied her, could not abide her resolute and wholesome cousin Silvia (this quite new kind of woman in comedy) being single-minded in her choice of Plume; Melinda therefore wrote to Ballance that Plume designed seducing his daughter. As Silvia's brother, dying, then left her an heiress, Ballance shut her up in the country, saying she must now marry higher than Plume; but Ballance put it about that Silvia had withdrawn to mourn her brother. Worthy, after condoling with Plume because Silvia, now of equal fortune with Melinda, would be equally haughty, found pieces of Melinda's letter to Ballance and told the old man that she was being only malicious to Silvia, also that Plume, busy recruiting and roystering, was disregarding Silvia. Behind these manœuvres of Worthy lay a fear that Melinda was now deserting him for his rival Brazen.

It is necessary to indicate the criss-cross of the conflicting love affairs in order to make clear certain later passages illustrative of Farquhar's dramatic development, as well as of his day-to-day experiences in the life he was now leading.

Melinda, in fact worried over not having lately seen Worthy, was walking along the Severn with Brazen. She withdrew from him when Worthy and Plume, separately, entered. As Plume and Brazen crossed swords, Melinda deserted Brazen for Worthy, and walked off with him. But the story took an unexpected turn when Silvia, in order to keep her eye vigilantly on her beloved Plume, entered dis-

guised as a man – Jack Wilful. The expedient of a woman thus stalking her lover, like Oriana in pursuit of Young Mirabel, was thin enough; but in this case Farquhar was making much more of his disguised character. Plume and Brazen now fought over Wilful, to see which one should get him for a gentleman-recruit; but as the ubiquitous Kite carried Wilful off, Brazen ceased fighting. This brought the love story to the end of Act III. Here was no comedy of manners; it was the comedy of humanity.

Farquhar went on dextrously to complicate the action by mixing up love and recruiting. Bullock and Rose, the rustics, met Wilful, and complained that Plume had ‘promised to marry the girl’. Plume entering, Wilful bargained with him over Rose for himself, to which Plume agreed provided Wilful would enlist in his company. There was a deal of good nature in Plume, rake and let rake. Then the temperamental Melinda quarrelled with Worthy for his indifference, and cuffed Brazen for his impudence. How should Worthy regain the favour of his beloved? Plume promised him that Kite would help, Worthy having given Kite the signature of Melinda from a letter. As the play unfolded, the Sergeant stepped more and more into the centre of its turns.

In the astrologer scene, at the height of Act IV, Farquhar taxed his invention to the limit. Melinda, to verify her signature, signed her name again for Kite, while Lucy, her maid, undetected picked up the second signature. On the morrow, said Kite to Melinda, a gentleman going abroad would salute her; if he went, he would die, as she would too before he returned. All this time Worthy and Plume listened unseen. Next Brazen engaged Kite, asking whether he, Brazen, would in twenty-four hours marry a lady who had written him; he left the letter with the astrologer to cogitate upon. Worthy noted it was in Lucy’s hand, though signed by Melinda. He produced the real signature of Melinda on a fragment, from which Plume ascertained that it was not Silvia’s disaffection, but a letter from Melinda, that caused the departure of Silvia into the country.

The plot thus far, as usual with Farquhar, left a good deal to be unravelled in Act V. Rose complained of a ‘disappointing’ night with Wilful. As Bullock, not protesting their

intimacy, entered the scene, a constable arrested all three. Wilful testified to Justice Ballance that he and Rose got 'married' by jumping over a sword. Since Wilful and Bullock were detained, another Justice took away Rose. Melinda, frightened by the astrologer, let herself be reconciled with Worthy, and they planned to seek out Silvia in the country. But Brazen, showing Plume Melinda's signature to a letter, swore he was to marry her, meeting her by the water side. A servant then informed the nonplussed Worthy that he was not to follow Melinda into the country, as she had put off finding Silvia, whereupon Worthy set out to catch Brazen and Melinda together. Meanwhile, in court, Wilful, with the other recruits, was very flippant to the deluded Justice (her father), and helped incriminate the Constable by revealing he had offered her freedom for two guineas. Ballance ironically directed Plume to enlist Wilful, and not upon any account to discharge him.

In the final untangling Lucy, masked, was walking in the fields with Brazen. Worthy entered with pistols. But as Lucy pulled off her mask, Brazen refused to accept her, and stalked away. Lucy explained to Worthy how she had tricked Brazen with the signature of Melinda picked up at the astrologer's, and it then developed that Melinda had put off her journey to Silvia in the country because she heard Silvia had left there. Ballance, ascertaining likewise, found Silvia had fled in a suit of white-and-silver once belonging to her brother; recalling this as the suit worn by Wilful, the Justice suspected Plume of having tricked him into consenting that the Captain keep Silvia. When Plume entered, Ballance asked him to discharge Wilful, 'whose father was an intimate friend', and Plume agreed. When Wilful-Silvia also entered, heard of his discharge, and was told by Ballance that he must go home to his father, Silvia fell to her knees, expecting no pardon. But Ballance, saying her crime would be her punishment, handed her over to Plume, to have and to hold. Worthy and Melinda entering, in search of Silvia, the two couples declared their intent to wed. As Brazen joined the party, he appeared well satisfied to have escaped from Lucy, and to let things go at that. He had no recruits; Plume would give him some, one of them Bullock, while

WHAT CAME FROM SHREWSBURY

Silvia got Rose for a maid. To bring down the curtain, Plume said he now had twenty recruits altogether, and would quit the service.

So ended this extraordinarily *busy* play, busy as its author's own life at the moment of writing, a play percipient of the ways of human nature. Farquhar in spite of himself had nearly given way to the unity of time, compressing his whole sixteen scenes into a day or two. Its unity of place, in and about Shrewsbury, was also conspicuous. It was a comedy skilfully balanced in its components, though woven into a tapestry elaborate enough. Written in obvious high spirits, within a few weeks in the early winter of 1705-6, *The Recruiting Officer* expressed a joy of life not seen in Farquhar's work since his earliest effort, *Love and a Bottle*, and a freshness, an originality, a spontaneity, which only an absorbing knowledge of his material could have given him. Possibly the breezy rural surroundings of the Wrekin, instead of the congested rivalries of Covent Garden, lent him the impetus of novelty, as in his first play the novelty of writing at all had furnished his pen with a certain sparkle. Yet the germ of *The Recruiting Officer* lay definitely in *The Stage-Coach*. That playlet had unlocked the countryside to the genius of Farquhar, who had then only to hit upon a theme that was timely. When he had the luck to be sent away from London, he found his theme in his daily and hourly life.

Those in Shrewsbury who knew what he was writing were enthusiastic about it. Farquhar said he had 'powerful helps to set it forward'. Ormonde having encouraged him, Orrery approved the play now that it was done. 'My recruits,' added the author after he had submitted his manuscript to his superior officers, 'were reviewed by my General and my Colonel, and could not fail to pass muster'. He had shown how Queen Anne raised her armies for Marlborough's wars; if there was corruption in the methods, Farquhar exposed them rather than condoned them; if some recruits were kidnapped, others joined up willingly; if Army life had its demoralizing side, it was in other ways regenerative. Not alone the civilian public, but the Services as well, should benefit from the exhibition of this play. Farquhar readily

obtained leave to take his comedy to London for the inspection of publisher and manager.

On February 12, 1706, he handed *The Recruiting Officer* to the fat man, the Horsham yeoman turned bookseller, Bernard Lintot, who now kept shop at the Cross Keys, next Nando's Coffee-house, in Fleet Street. That shrewd personage needed in this instance only a glance to make up his mind. At once he paid the author £16 2s. 6d. Here was a helpful sum against the rather neglected wants of Margaret Farquhar and the infants Anne Marguerite and Mary.

It was then but a step from Lintot to Christopher Rich, who without ado began to cast the play for Drury Lane. Wilks and Cibber, obviously, were to be Plume and Brazen. Anne Oldfield, the new and successful Lady Lurewell, was the immediate choice for Silvia. If personally Farquhar had lost Anne, who was now the mistress of Arthur Maynwaring, M.P., Auditor of Imprests, that was extraneous; at least she had 'wronged no man's wife, nor had an husband to injure'; what mattered was that she was well on her way to becoming the leading actress not only in Drury Lane, but in all London. An equally important newcomer to a Farquhar play was the author's old colleague, again from Smock Alley, Richard Estcourt. Farquhar himself specially selected him for the eminence of Sergeant Kite.

Though Estcourt had been appearing in London for only about a year and a half, he was accounted a matchless mimic, easy, free, unaffected. He had won great repute as Falstaff and as the Gravedigger; then, just the year before, as Pounce, the lawyer, in Dick Steele's best comedy, *The Tender Husband*. Estcourt had 'an exquisite discerning', said Steele, 'of what was defective in any object'. Men about town 'repeated his smart repartees', and he seemed already the veritable successor of the sadly missed Joe Haynes. On the strength of these four actors alone, an agreeable reception for *The Recruiting Officer* appeared to be foregone.

Most of the other characters that counted were to be undertaken by old familiars who had previously been seen in Farquhar: the reliable Mrs. Rogers as Melinda, Joseph Williams as Worthy, 'Dicky' Norris (lately married to a sister of Wilks's wife) and Fairbank as Pearmain and Apple-

tree, while William Bullock naturally took the part which Farquhar had both written and named for him. Only the remaining lesser roles were filled by players new to Farquhar comedy: Theophilus Keen (of Farquhar's Smock Alley days) as Justice Ballance, Philips and Kent as the other Justices, Mrs. Mountfort as Rose, and Mrs. Sapsford as Lucy.

After a month of rehearsing, *The Recruiting Officer* was about ready to open. It had no clear field; both theatres were bidding for favour with other productions, and what with the lateness of the season Farquhar was anxious lest his play be postponed to its disadvantage and his own. London was again inclining to opera. Drury Lane was booked for the end of March by *Camilla*, its music by Buononcini, its libretto by Stampiglio done into English by Owen Swiney (still another invader from Dublin), and its title part to be sung by Katherine Tofts, a winsome young concert artist of about twenty-five. Then for the Haymarket the prolific Tom Durfey had turned out a rival opera, *Wonders in the Sun, or the Kingdom of the Birds* – an ambitious attempt, with human variations, to set Aristophanes to music. This attraction was billed for April 5.

Camilla opened on March 29. Since it was not sung every night, open dates for *The Recruiting Officer* were soon available, the first being April 8, for which date Farquhar insisted that his play be posted. No sooner was this done than Durfey objected that he wished to have his third night, or benefit performance, also on April 8. Managers had a sort of unwritten agreement, in respect of benefit nights, not to bring on a new play in competition. But it happened that both Durfey and Farquhar were impatient, and neither would postpone, as the day of the week, Monday, was a favourable time. *The Recruiting Officer* opened as announced.

To some degree this event constituted Farquhar's 'return to the theatre'. The intervals between his plays had hitherto been considerably shorter, from only nine to seventeen months; it was now over two years, twenty-six months, since the production of *The Stage-Coach*. Some may have thought that after Farquhar elected life in the Army, with his subsistence for the first time regularly found, and with promotion in prospect perhaps enough to maintain even

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

his family, he would leave off his precarious career in play-writing. His reappearance in Drury Lane was the more welcome, particularly in view of the stir caused in advance by so topical a play as *The Recruiting Officer*.

For his prologue Farquhar cleverly drew a parallel with the recruitment of Achilles by Ulysses, and followed it by an astute comparison between the beauty of Helen and that of the ladies in the pit:

'Thus by recruiting was bold Hector slain;
Recruiting thus fair Helen did regain . . .
If by one Helen's eyes old Greece could find
Its Homer fired to write – even Homer blind,
The Britons sure beyond compare may write
That view so many Helens every night.'

To the drumbeat of the Grenadier March, Dick Estcourt as Sergeant Kite came on at the start, and made a speech to the mob: 'If any gentlemen soldiers, or others, have a mind to serve Her Majesty, and pull down the French King, if any prentices have severe masters, any children have undutiful parents; if any servants have too little wages, or any husband too much wife, let them repair to the noble Sergeant Kite, at the sign of the Raven, in this good town of Shrewsbury, and they shall receive present relief and entertainment – Gentlemen, I don't beat my drums here to insnare or inveigle any man, for you must know, gentlemen, that I am a man of honour. Besides, I don't beat up for common soldiers; no, I list only grenadiers, grenadiers, gentlemen – Pray, gentlemen, observe this cap – This is a cap of honour; it dubs a man a gentleman in the drawing of a tricker; and he that has the good fortune to be born six foot high was born to be a great man. . . .'

It was in like manner that Ben Jonson had drawn his Volpone, mounted on a bank, as vendor of the 'blessed unguento': 'And gentlemen, honourable gentlemen, know, that for this time, our bank, being thus removed from the clamours of the canaglia, shall be the scene of pleasure and delight; for I have nothing to sell, little or nothing to sell . . . I protest, I, and my six servants, are not able to make of this precious liquor, so fast as it is fetched away from my lodging by gentlemen of your city; strangers of the Terra-firma;

worshipful merchants; ay, and senators too: who, ever since my arrival, have detained me to their uses by their splendidous liberalities. . . .’

But Farquhar, having struck the key of his own play at once, and set the character of Kite, confined the sergeant’s lines thereafter to shorter compass.

The comedy moved swiftly. In another moment the brisk author had moulded both Plume and Worthy in a lively speech by Plume, advising his friend on how to set about winning Melinda:

‘Come, Worthy, your obsequious and distant airs will never bring you together. You must not think to surmount her pride by your humility . . . she must be reduced to a meaner opinion of herself. . . . The very first thing I would do should be to lie with her chambermaid, and hire three or four wenches in the neighbourhood to report that I had got them with child. Suppose we lampooned all the pretty women in town, and left her out? Or what if we made a ball, and forgot to invite her, with one or two of the ugliest? . . . What! no bastards? And so many recruiting officers in town! I thought ’twas a maxim among them to leave as many recruits in the country as they carried out.’

On the other hand, as soon as Melinda and Silvia met, Farquhar had Silvia speak her, and his, ideal. It was the ‘natural’ woman, whom he had discovered during his country life, and now brought into Restoration comedy as something distinctly new: ‘So far as to be troubled with neither spleen, colic, nor vapours, I need no salt for my stomach, no hart-shorn for my head, nor wash for my complexion. I can gallop all morning after the hunting horn, and all evening after a fiddle; in short, I can do everything with my father but drink and shoot flying; and I’m sure I could do everything my mother could were I put to the trial.’ Thus did Anne Oldfield blithely step into the sort of part that Farquhar had so long wanted her to play, for him.

Then the audience got another shock of originality in Brazen, the rival recruiting officer, as in the person of the irrepressible Colley Cibber he made his entrance to encounter Worthy and Ballance:

BRA: Mr. Worthy, I’m your servant, and so forth – Heark’e, my dear——

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

WOR: Whispering, sir, before company is not manners, and when nobdy's by, 'tis foolish.

BRA: Company! *Mort de ma vie*, I beg the gentleman's pardon. Who is he?

WOR: Ask him.

BRA: So I will. My dear, I'm your servant, and so forth. Your name, my dear?

BAL: Very laconic, sir.

BRA: Laconic. A very good name truly. I have known several of the Laconics abroad. Poor Jack Laconic! He was killed at the Battle of Landen. I remember that he had a blue ribband in his hat that very day, and after he fell, we found a piece of neat's tongue in his pocket. . . . I had two and twenty horses killed under me that day . . . all torn to pieces by cannon-shot, except six that I staked to death upon the enemy's *chevaux de frise*. . . .

WOR: Do you know Captain Plume, sir?

BRA: Is he anything related to Frank Plume in Northamptonshire? Honest Frank! Many, many a dry bottle have we cracked hand to fist. You must have known his brother Charles that was concerned in the India company. He married the daughter of old Tongue-Pad the Master in Chancery, a very pretty woman, only squinted a little. She died in child-bed of her first child; but the child survived; 'twas a daughter, but whether 'twas called Margaret or Marjory, upon my soul I can't remember. – But, gentlemen, I must meet a lady, a twenty thousand pounder, presently, upon the walk by the water. – Worthy, your servant; Laconic, yours.

(Exit.)

Analogous to the well-known pest who, when one innocently mentions a prince, can hardly wait to say *he* talked with a king, Brazen, who 'knew everybody', was a universal. Here was Cibber in full cry, with a part that vied with Lord Foppington himself. In Brazen, Farquhar had created one of those characters whose entrances the audience long for. As soon as Brazen ran into Silvia disguised as Jack Wilful he exclaimed, 'What! the Kentish Wilfuls, or those

WHAT CAME FROM SHREWSBURY

of Staffordshire?' Farquhar had buoyantly returned to pure comedy, the comedy of personalities.

Yet he did not forget that he was a writer of the lingering Restoration school. When Silvia as Wilful met Bullock and Rose, after Rose had been with Plume at his lodgings, these lines gave the pit what it was accustomed to hear:

SIL: Soh! – and pray what do you expect from this Captain, child?

ROSE: I expect, sir! I expect, – but he ordered me to tell nobody – but suppose that he should promise to marry me?

SIL: You should have a care, my dear. Men will promise anything beforehand.

ROSE: I know that. But he promised to marry me afterwards.

BUL: Wauns, Ruose! What have you said?

SIL: Afterwards! After what?

ROSE: After I had sold him my chickens. – I hope there's no harm in it, though there be an ugly song of chickens and sparagus.

It was so that Farquhar brought his rustics into humorous collision with young country ladies of Shrewsbury like Silvia. He got his effect equally well when he had Plume explain to Silvia that, having bribed Rose with presents and promises, he had no interest in seducing the girl:

'I have already gained my ends, which were only the drawing in one or two of her followers. The women, you know, are the lodestones everywhere. Gain the wives, and you're caressed by the husbands; please the mistresses, and you are valued by their gallants; secure an interest with the finest women at Court, and you procure the favour of the greatest men: so kiss the prettiest country wenches, and you are sure of listing the lustiest fellows. Some people may call this artifice; but I term it stratagem, since it is so main a part of the service. Besides, the fatigue of recruiting is so intolerable that unless we could make ourselves some pleasure amidst the pain, no mortal man would be able to bear it.'

But Farquhar, in the words of Plume persuading Wilful (Silvia) to enlist, was in point of fact describing himself at this stage of his life: 'Faith, I am not that rake the world imagines; I have got an air of freedom, which people mistake

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

for lewdness in me, as they mistake formality in others for religion. The world is all a cheat; only I take mine, which is undesigned, to be more excusable than theirs, which is hypocritical. I hurt nobody but myself, and they abuse all mankind.'

Then as he had set Silvia opposite Rose, he deftly pitted Melinda against her maid Lucy. Melinda had been consulting Kite in his role of astrologer:

MEL: One thing very surprising: he said I should die a maid.

LUC: Die a maid! Come into the world for nothing! Dear Madam, if you should believe him, it might come to pass, for the bare thought on't might kill one in four and twenty hours. And did you ask him any questions about me?

MEL: You! Why, I passed for you.

LUC: So 'tis I that am to die a maid! But the Devil was a liar from the beginning. He can't make me die a maid. I have put it out of his power already.

The ingenious scenes with Kite followed, in which he contrived the enlistment of the smith and the butcher, and frightened Melinda into ceasing her coquetry with Worthy, and accepting him. Brazen himself had to capitulate, in a scene of excellent fooling with that persuasive sergeant-astrologer:

BRA: Your servant, servant, my dear.

KITE: Stand off – I have my familiar ready.

BRA: Are you bewitched, my dear?

KITE: Yes, my dear, but mine is a peaceable spirit, and hates gunpowder – thus I fortify myself (*draws a circle round him*) and now, Captain, have a care how you force my lines.

BRA: Lines! what dost talk of lines? You are something like a fishing rod there, indeed; but I come to be acquainted with you, man. What's your name, my dear?

KITE: Conundrum.

BRA: Conundrum! Rat me! I know a famous doctor in London of your name. Where were you born?

KITE: I was born in Algebra.

BRA: Algebra! 'Tis no country in Christendom, I'm sure,

WHAT CAME FROM SHREWSBURY

unless it be some pitiful place in the highlands of Scotland.

KITE: Right! I told you I was bewitched.

BRA: So am I, my dear. I'm going to be married. I've had two letters from a lady of fortune that loves me to madness, fits, colic, spleen, and vapours – shall I marry her in four and twenty hours, ay or no?

KITE: I must have the year and day o' th' month when these letters were dated.

BRA: Why, you old bitch, did you ever hear of love letters dated with the year and day o' th' month? Do you think *billets-doux* are like bank bills?

But Kite got the letter from him, written by Lucy, though apparently signed by Melinda. So masterly was the performance of Estcourt as the sergeant that it was he, rather than Wilks as Plume, that nearly ran away with the show.

In a scene in the final act, with the Justices, Farquhar once more described himself – though he was here not far off a picture of many another recruiting officer – in the person of Silvia as Wilful:

SIL: I'm called Captain, sir, by all the coffee-men, drawers, whores and groom porters in London, for I wear a red coat, a sword *bien trousseé*, a martial twist in my cravat, a fierce knot in my perriwig, a cane upon my button, picket in my hand, and dice in my pocket.

SCALE: Your name, pray sir.

SIL: Captain Pinch. I cock my hat with a pinch, I take snuff with a pinch, pay my whores with a pinch; in short, I can do anything at a pinch, but fight and fill my belly.

BALL: And pray sir, what brought you into Shropshire?

SIL: A pinch, sir. I knew that you country gentlemen want wit, and you know that we town gentlemen want money.

There was more truth about George Farquhar in those lines, how he looked as a Lieutenant of Grenadiers, his manner as such, what he thought, did, and intended, than

many who watched the first night of *The Recruiting Officer* had perhaps anticipated.

In his epilogue Farquhar, oddly enough, made a new departure, composing it in both prose and verse. Since the epilogue was as usual to be dropt after the third performance, he began thus: 'All ladies and gentlemen that are willing to see the comedy called *The Recruiting Officer*, let them repair tomorrow night by six a clock to the sign of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, and they shall be kindly entertained.' After a few verses on the penchant of the public for music, he pleaded the appropriateness, and the superiority, of the Grenadier March. Then he took a fling at the rival attraction in the same house, Owen Swiney's opera: 'Ladies, we must own that this music of ours is not altogether as soft as Buononcini's, yet we dare affirm that it has laid more people asleep than all the *Camilla's* in the world; and you'll condescend to own that it keeps one awake better than any opera that ever was acted.' (One of the more soporific scenes in *Camilla* was perhaps that between Katherine Tofts, who sang soprano, and a wild boar, whose feigned brutality collapsed before 'the erect mien, charming voice, and graceful motion' of the singer.) As all operas were produced by subscription, the theatre was not deeply interested in the length of their run, and Farquhar, vitally concerned in the run of *The Recruiting Officer*, was safe in making his thrust. 'With all deference,' he went on about *Camilla*, 'to the present subscription, we must say that the Grenadier March has been subscribed for by the whole Grand Alliance.'

Which would draw the larger patronage to Drury Lane in the current competition, *Camilla*, or *The Recruiting Officer*? By way of combatting the musical craze that was gripping London, it was not uncommon for plays to add singing and dancing acts for the intervals of their performance. 'To gratify the present taste,' Farquhar concluded his epilogue, 'our author is now adapting some words to the Grenadier March, which he intends to have performed tomorrow, if the lady who is to sing it should not happen to be sick.

'This he concludes to be the surest way,
To draw you hither, for you'll all obey
Soft music's call, though you should damn his play.'

WHAT CAME FROM SHREWSBURY

This entire protest was possibly badinage. On the other hand, more than six years had elapsed since he had written for the theatre an unqualified success; the first night of *A Trip to the Jubilee* was an age away. George Farquhar had almost lost the cast of thought that he could be successful; his apparent anxiety suggested the ebb to which his self-confidence had fallen. So unsure did he seem that *The Recruiting Officer* would stand a chance against an Italian opera that he felt impelled to make this laboured epilogue of jibes, bribes, excuses and appeals to patriotism. He had to say that if only the audience would tell their friends to come, he would add some songs to make *The Recruiting Officer* more fashionable. Experience seemed never to allow Farquhar any sense of knowing, before production, whether what he had written was worth even the effort. The playgoers of London, as always, would now decide.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TIDES

WHATEVER the fate of *Camilla* in rivalry with *The Recruiting Officer*, Farquhar's play swept the second competitor, the Aristophanic opera by Tom Durfey, out of the running. Not only did the première of *The Recruiting Officer* leave the other house thin on its third and benefit night, but the Wednesday, April 10, which was the benefit date for Farquhar himself, found the Haymarket still thinner. Poor Durfey's badly hatched birds had to be withdrawn after only five appearances, while *The Recruiting Officer*, with a swiftness which not even *A Trip to the Jubilee* had matched, was raising George Farquhar to eminence renewed.

He was sorry for old Durfey; but that was the luck of the theatre. Farquhar himself had met with the identical discomfiture, when in 1702 *She Would and She Would Not*, by Cibber, had proved too strong for *The Twin Rivals* to survive alongside it. Yet old Tom need not have grudged young Farquhar his success, Tom Durfey who had produced a play before Farquhar was born, had written a play a year for twenty years, and was now aged fifty-three; he had had his innings; and he could still do his Falstaffian walk down the Strand with his page, let them laugh as they would over his actors drest as crows, parrots, and hoopoes.

The public liked *The Recruiting Officer* not only as a satire on swashbuckling – just as the ancient Romans had applauded the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus precisely 1,900 years before – but because it was an exhilarating change from the drama of social obliquity, with all its affectation, shallowness, and avarice beneath its tinsel of wit. As an actor who had himself played Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Dryden, Etherege above all, George Farquhar,

THE TIDES

though perhaps not wholly conscious of his advantage, reflected a sensitivity to theatre and audience alike, a professional touch, that none of his contemporaries, not even Congreve, had gained. The compeers of Farquhar all understood nature; but Farquhar, many now agreed, was the one who knew best how to handle the mirror.

Of the five performances of *The Recruiting Officer* in its first week, that of the Saturday provided its crowning reception, banishing the habitual apprehension of the author, as voiced in his epilogue on the first night, that the audience would 'damn his play'. On this Saturday *The Recruiting Officer* was announced 'by particular desire of some persons of quality'. That sounded very much like the support in person at the theatre of the Duke of Ormonde and the Earl of Orrery, or at least like the support of their friends. Some of the credit thereof must go to Dick Estcourt, who 'had the honour in comedy always to *laetificate* his audience, especially (the) quality'.

The meaning of this acclaim to the dramatist, with its consequent full houses, was that it assured him an additional three performances in the week next following, of which two, on April 15 and 20, were to be further benefit nights for himself. If ever Farquhar had reason to believe that he might, after all, fairly maintain his wife and children, and the two Pemell children as well, this was the time.

Straight off Bernard Lintot published the book of the play, which Farquhar dedicated in a manner that pointed to his honest feelings: 'To all Friends round the Wrekin'. Forthrightly he began what he had to say in this wise: 'Instead of the mercenary expectations that attend addresses of this nature, I humbly beg that this may be received as an acknowledgement for the favours you have already conferred. I have transgressed the rules of dedication in offering you anything in that style without first asking your leave. But the entertainment I found in Shropshire commands me to be grateful, and that's all I need.' As there had been some talk about his brush with Tom Durfey, Farquhar thought fit to deal, not too solemnly, with that contretemps: 'I humbly beg leave to interline a word or two of the adventures of *The Recruiting Officer* upon the stage. Mr. Rich, who com-

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

mands the company for which these recruits were raised, has desired me to acquit him before the world of a charge which he thinks lies heavy upon him for acting the play on Mr. Durfey's third night.

'Be it known to all men by these presents, that it was my act and deed, or rather Mr. Durfey's, for he *would* play his third night against the first of mine. He brought down a huge flight of frightful Birds upon me, when (Heaven knows) I had not a feathered fowl in my play, except one single Kite. But I presently made Plume a bird, because of his name, and Brazen another, because of the feather in his hat; and with these three I engaged his whole Empire, which I think was as great a Wonder as any in the Sun. But to answer his complaints more gravely, the season was far advanced; the officers that made the greatest figures in my play were all commanded to their posts abroad, and waited only for a wind, which might possibly turn in less time than a day. And I know none of Mr. Durfey's birds that had posts abroad but his woodcocks, and their season is over, so that he might put off a day with less prejudice than the Recruiting Officer could, who has this farther to say for himself, that he was posted before the other spoke, and could not with credit recede from his station.'

With further graceful compliments to the natives of Shrewsbury, including in particular the originals of Justice Ballance and Bullock, and with a word of salute to Ormonde and Orrery for having encouraged him, Farquhar sped his book on its way. The published version of course helped the play by increasing discussion of it, although at neither theatre was there any competition from new plays for the rest of the season.

At the same time, the superb cast drawn for and by Farquhar had no little to do with the triumph of the author. Contemporary criticism, even when written a little later than these actual performances, indicated that the abiding impression made by this comedy came from the character of Kite, as interpreted, however, by the one and only Dick Estcourt. Captain Steele, as a writer of less successful comedies, bore neither particular friendship for Farquhar as fellow-officer, nor undue enthusiasm for him as an abler

THE TIDES

dramatist, but was generous in giving his actors their due. 'Mr. Estcourt's proper sense and observation,' Steele observed of *The Recruiting Officer*, 'is what supports the play. There is not, in my humble opinion, the humour hit in Sergeant Kite; but it is admirably supplied by his action.' Estcourt's looks and gestures alone conveyed an exact idea of a character. He was a plump merry fellow, who off stage so perfectly imitated whichever person he was talking to that, as Steele recorded, everyone else in the company laughed, while the man addressed either knew himself so little, or thought so well of himself, that he saw nothing to laugh at. This great art off stage was only a fraction of what Estcourt knew how to do in a play, especially in a part that so showered him with opportunities as the part of Kite did.

Of others who were in the cast, Steele remarked, 'The first of the present stage are Wilks and Cibber, perfect actors in their different kinds. Wilks has a singular talent in representing the graces of nature, Cibber the deformity in the affectation of them.' So much for their fitness to play Plume and Brazen. Cibber was so expert in his acting that he 'knew how to take an audience; he lay in wait for their superficial applause, but insinuated into their affections and passions by artful management of look, voice and gesture.' But in the judgment of Steele, Wilks, who was the highest paid actor of the day, had always one difficulty to surmount: so memorable had been his performance in *A Trip to the Jubilee* that 'whatever Wilks is acting, the vulgar spectators turn their thoughts upon Sir Harry Wildair.' This was assuredly high tribute to Farquhar, if not specifically to *The Recruiting Officer*. Of Bullock, the country clown, whom Farquhar said he drew *in puris naturalibus*, 'an apprehensive, sturdy, brave blockhead', Steele noted that 'he has a peculiar talent of looking like a fool'.

But it was left for both Steele and Cibber ultimately to commend the art of Anne Oldfield, the actress who 'always looked like one of those principal figures in the finest paintings'. Steele wrote of a man of his acquaintance 'who never spoke without an oath' until he saw Mrs. Oldfield act. Colley Cibber, once Anne at Bath had convinced him of her talents, had this to say of the woman who had so brilliantly created

Silvia: 'Authors had much more from her performance than they had reason to hope for from what they had written for her . . . it was a hard matter to give her any hint that she was not able to take or improve'. Here was uncommon praise for a star of the stage, for one so self-effacing that she continually besought her fellow-actors to tell her how she could brighten a phrase, a movement, or a costume. But thus it was that Anne cultivated her talents, just as she cultivated 'her excellent clear voice of passion, her piercing flaming eye, with manner and action suiting'.

Quite apart from the actors, the applause which welcomed *The Recruiting Officer* to Drury Lane had other reasons at the bottom of it. Farquhar had hit upon the very happiest choice of a subject, had drawn to it characters in dazzling variety, had contrived an absorbing plot whose sixteen scenes showed in their motives no less variety, had written his dialogue in a style that bespoke life itself, and had enlivened the comedy throughout with a flowing humour completely natural to its situations. The play was topical, timely in the highest degree, a sharp commentary on the Impressment Act newly invoked by Queen Anne; but, as Farquhar said in respect of his friends in Shrewsbury, it was a comedy, not a libel, and though some authorities may have felt uneasy about its revelations, none took offence.

George Farquhar himself saw his latent but impeded and unfulfilled abilities reach fruition in this play. Again he was that rare combination: university man, actor, dramatist. On this footing of education, experience, and talent he was unlike any of his contemporaries; he in consequence possessed that much advantage over them. Indeed these triple qualifications had been unmatched in the whole of English drama, unless perhaps by Philip Massinger when he was associated with the King's company of actors nearly a century before. There had been university men who wrote plays, and actors who wrote plays, but hardly any other university man who was an actor, and certainly no personage in Farquhar's lifetime who like him was all three. Poor Otway had tried to act; so had mad Nat Lee; both failed irreparably, not after a year of it, like Farquhar, but after their very first performance. The benefits altogether of education,

THE TIDES

acting, and writing endowed Farquhar with a distinction which should have given him more confidence than he had.

The intellectual side of *The Recruiting Officer*, then, rested firmly on the foundation which Farquhar had gained at Trinity College. Its naturalness and its gay humour he knew how to furnish because from his acting days his pulse beat to what pleased an audience and to what it understood. Finally, his talent was allotted him at birth. Inferior as he was to Wycherley in strength, to Congreve in wit, to Vanbrugh in sparkle, Farquhar, by adding *The Recruiting Officer* to *A Trip to the Jubilee*, had now doubled his reputation, and he could rank with the others as their compeer, not for having copied them, but for having given to the comedy of the era the qualities of speed, fun, and naturalness, while in the delineation of manners he had outranged even Vanbrugh. It was no small satisfaction to Farquhar to see *The Recruiting Officer* acted twice more, on June 11 and 20, by way of ending the season. These performances stamped the play as the hit of the theatrical year in Drury Lane.

If the other circumstances of his life at this time had been anywhere near so happy, young Farquhar could have looked forward without anxiety. But he was in debt. Benefit nights alone, which netted actors from £50 to £90 and could hardly have fetched authors any less, should have relieved his present embarrassment enough to keep his numerous family from actual want, what with his officer's pay from the commission which he still held. Nevertheless Farquhar in the wake of a celebrated success was facing financial failure, owing partly no doubt to his having spent so much of his Army pay in getting recruits. Worse than this handicap, he was ill. Illness and debt, with a wife, two children, and two step-children on his hands – the depressing weight of these anxieties seemed to have transformed a winter of comedy into a summer of tragedy.

Farquhar had come back from Shrewsbury to live in York Buildings, at the corner of Villiers Street and the Strand. It was an extraordinary edifice. It housed everything from tenants to concerts, allowed both home and office under the same roof, provided any size of accommodations from

chambers to 'great rooms', and even sheltered a company which supplied water from the Thames to the Strand. Men of letters seemed to fancy York Buildings. Richard Steele, later on, first rented a fantastic concert hall there, and later still took up living quarters at the identical address.

The malady which in these lodgings now beset the harried author of *The Recruiting Officer* was probably a recurrence of that 'very tedious fit of sickness' which he had incurred when in Holland, the ailment that almost sent him 'a longer journey than he was willing to undertake'. In the winter thereafter he had been stricken again. He called it rheumatism; but he had withdrawn from London to Richmond to recuperate from it, and in that windy suburb he had found the air 'too piercing' for him to go outdoors 'after so much bleeding'. Though this may have meant phlebotomy rather than a hemorrhage, Farquhar still seems to have suffered from tuberculosis. His recent exertions in Lichfield and Shrewsbury, so healthful, it seemed at the time, had proved too much for him; he had over-taxed, and now he was in the throes of a setback.

The nature of pulmonary tuberculosis would explain a good deal of the fecundity of his talent. Like most authors who have struggled against pulmonary trouble, Farquhar would be subject to an abnormally high temperature from day to day, and would write at a feverish rate, as he did do, in response to ideas which came thick and fast into his abnormally active imagination. But this time he had written himself into exhaustion, what with his previous rushing about on recruiting duty. Again he remained indoors; but he did not desist from writing. As if to make the pot boil yet once more for the Farquhars, he was concocting a long poem, celebrating the achievement of Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, who in April of the year before, having been in command of the Spanish expedition, had reduced Barcelona.

This victory had swept London with a commotion comparable almost to that which followed upon the Battle of Blenheim. An officer known to Farquhar, 'an ingenious friend', who was at the siege, returned to England some time afterward. fell in with Farquhar, and narrated his ex-

periences. He so fired the eager young subaltern with patriotism, with poetic martial fervour, that nothing would do but to write an epic, a minor Iliad, on the whole war: Farquhar must have had a good many interviews, not merely with this soldier back from Spain, but with other fellow-officers who had fought elsewhere, both on land and sea. It is said that still others sent him long letters from the front. Once started, at all events, he was writing not just stanzas, but cantos. He hardly missed a general, nor a battle-field. For a man who had not witnessed a single engagement himself, but depended altogether on second-hand information, he was turning out a concatenation of tableaux in verse, and portraits of heroes – everyone was a hero – that might well induce dizziness even at a casual glance. Perhaps if he had seen more he would have written less. But his plan of six cantos, to a total of 1,500 lines, was the performance of a man who had grown quite possessed on the subject of the British Army.

Though Peterborough was the Achilles of the piece, there was perhaps a little method in Farquhar's project too, for he lugged in his patron Ormonde. The title of the poem was *Barcelona*. But the Duke, it appeared, merited mention for having fought at Vigo three years earlier:

This was great Ormonde's valiant feat of arms,
Whose martial presence animates and charms;
Mars the great god of war frowns in his eye,
And Cupid, god of love, sits smiling by . . .
His graceful presence is to none denied,
For he's too great to stoop to slavish pride;
His veins have often shed a purple flood,
And like the sea, his precious vital blood
Has flowed, and always ready is to flow,
To guard this British island from the foe. . . .

This was a fair sample of the epic, which it was as well that Ormonde probably did not see. During this year of 1706 Farquhar is said to have applied to the Duke for assistance to pay off certain debts. Ormonde, it appears, could only suggest that his Lieutenant sell his commission. However, to dispose of his one assured resource did not appeal to young Farquhar. Ormonde, truly enough, might be no more responsive to literary tributes than Carmarthen had been, or

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Albemarle. But why, thought Farquhar, should he himself by resigning the Army risk losing as well the favour of Orrery, his Colonel? The dramatist went doggedly on with his epic:

Horrid the sense – from steep to steep they bound,
At last with frightful smash they daub the ground,
Some stuck half way, on pointed rocks complain,
And cry for death to ease their wretched pain;
The prospect lengthened, for below are seen
Promiscuous arms, brains, legs, and trunks of men. . . .

Great Homer himself, in depicting the exploits of his warriors, did not spare anatomy; but somehow, goriness in Greek was a different matter from its equivalent in English.

In point of style, clarity, taste, coherence, George Farquhar was far from a model in either poetry or prose. When he was pursuing a woman, true it was that he often wrote her a lyrical poem in prose, an impassioned letter that was well nigh irresistible. But his genius, as a writer, lay in dramatic dialogue alone. His essays, his prefaces, his dedications, abounding though they were in ideas, in thought, in pungent literary sense, were mostly formless and cumbersome, so tangled up did he become in the luxuriance of his sentences. Much of his poetry – outside a few happy little quatrains of songs in the plays – was incongruous, indecorous, jangling, dull, every way bad. This was perhaps the more remarkable in view of Farquhar's respect for Dryden, who had set the standard of that very day in both prose and poetry. Earlier than the time of Dryden, with regard to what constituted poetry, Farquhar appears to have read overmuch Ben Jonson and Fletcher, and not widely enough in Shakespeare. On the other hand, it is questionable how far his reading influenced his astonishing facility in dialogue. From the very life he saw and heard round him he *transcribed* nature, and he may be said to have talked in dialogue because the dialogue came.

His labours at epic were as far from his dramatic achievement as Barcelona was from Troy. With destitution approaching him, with illness increasing upon him, in the early autumn of this year – September 16 – came news from Bath that he had won still higher applause there by a

THE TIDES

performance of *The Recruiting Officer*, acted, as on its fifth night in Drury Lane, before 'several persons of quality'. Word of a great victory gained by the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene had just reached Bath, and Dick Estcourt, who with a summer company of players was again appearing as Sergeant Kite, added to the song hit of the comedy this impromptu stanza:

The noble Captain Prince Eugene
Has beat French, Orleans and Marsin,
And marched up and relieved Turin,
Over the hills and far away. . . .

Neither audience nor actors in Bath, which was also 'far away', had anything to complain of with regard to the theatre. But in London controversy was rampant. Meagre audiences had obliged the managers, so they said, to cut the salaries of the actors. Vanbrugh, in his effort to make opera a paying venture at the Haymarket, had failed; so desperate a makeshift as an extra three performances of *Durfey's Wonders in the Sun*, with its 'comic scenes only', had at that house only accentuated the failure. At this juncture the majority of Rich's actors, resentful and seeing their chance, revolted from Drury Lane and sought out Owen Swiney for their new manager. In the same week in which *The Recruiting Officer* was enchanting all Bath, Congreve wrote to his friend Joseph Keally: 'The playhouses have undergone another revolution; and Swinny, with Wilks, Mrs. Oldfield, Pinkethman, Bullock, and Dicky, are come over to the Haymarket. Vanbrugh resigns his authority to Swinny, which occasioned the revolt. Mr. Rich complains and rails like Volpone when counterplotted by Mosca. . . .' (Pinkey had in fact remained with Rich.) This left for Drury Lane, amongst the more important actors, only Cibber, Pinkethman and Estcourt, the latter being in Bath at the time. But Estcourt would have remained loyal to Rich in any case, for, almost alone of the major players, he considered his manager a man of 'sweet temper . . . generous in his conduct of the theatre'.

This desertion of the actors the Lord Chamberlain 'approved and ratified'. It was designed, according to Congreve, to have plays only at the Haymarket, and to put

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

operas into Drury Lane. Rich, however, picked up the remnants of his company and on October 24 opened his season in Dorset Gardens, billing his players as the Drury Lane company, and defiantly starting the ball rolling with no other play than *The Recruiting Officer*. He repeated this comedy on November 1, 14, 18, and 30, and he advertised it with 'several entertainments of singing by Mrs. Tofts, and entertainments of dancing'. But one Mrs. Linsey unexpectedly replaced the 'fair Toftida'. Possibly great Katherine had taken umbrage upon hearing Farquhar's gentle scoffing at *Camilla* in his epilogue on his first night in the spring last past.

Over her defection Farquhar, ill as he was, suffered no relapse. He had in fact cause to be the more amused, since the deserters to the Haymarket thrust back defiance at Rich by themselves playing *The Recruiting Officer* in opposition, and on the same nights of November 14 and 18. To this bravado Rich retorted, 'The true Sergeant Kite (Estcourt) is to be seen at Drury Lane alone'. He also had in Pinkey the true Tummas. Yet the Haymarket had won most of the stars: Wilks as Plume, Oldfield as Silvia, Bullock as Bullock, Norris as Costar Pearmain, and now, Cibber as Brazen, Cibber having come over early in November.

But for Farquhar's unremitting illness, which his wife described as 'tedious, lingering and expensive', these days would have been for him exciting enough. (His 'expensive' physician appears to have been the rising young John Shadwell, M.D., F.R.S., son of Thomas Shadwell the dramatist.) George Farquhar, with all London resounding from the battle over his masterpiece, lay in his chambers in York Buildings, weak, depressed, dispirited, but himself still battling with canto after canto of his epic *Barcelona*, seeing much of it requiring revision that he was too ill to undertake. Even graver was his torment of mind, which caused 'more pain to him in imagining that his family might want a needful support, than the most violent death that could be inflicted on him'.

One thing he did manage. He wrote a prologue for a new play by his old love, Susanna Carroll. Suky in this very year, whilst grandly enacting Alexander the Great in Nat Lee's

THE TIDES

Rival Queens as a member of a strolling company at Windsor, had met Queen Anne's chef, M. Joseph Centlivre. Deciding to make quite sure where her next meal was coming from, she married him. Her play, *The Platonic Lady*, with Wilks in the leading part of Belvil, and Anne Oldfield and Anne Bracegirdle appearing for the first time together, announced to open on November 25, was billed as by Susanna Centlivre. Farquhar's prologue – as well it might do in the midst of his wrestling with the exploits of heroes – took the form of a tribute to the Duke of Marlborough, after Ramillies, but ended with a lament that the stage could not represent an action fit to commemorate that victory adequately:

But our poor Pegasus, a beast of ease,
Cares not for foraging beyond the seas;
Content with London provender, he flies
To make each coxcomb he can find, a prize;
And after trudging long, perhaps he may
Pick up a set of fools, to furnish out a play. . . .

Such lines were only too expressive of the state of feelings in which Farquhar at the moment found himself. He could go foraging not even to the Haymarket Theatre nor to Dorset Gardens, the only places he wanted to go to. What author would not have longed to rush from one theatre to the other as long as the present seething competition lasted? Further performances of *The Recruiting Officer*, the reigning success, the talk of the town, the play of all playgoers, were posted both by Rich and by Swiney, on November 28 at Dorset Gardens, on the 30 at the Haymarket, and on the 30 also back at Drury Lane, Rich having boldly retransferred his company to their home surroundings. But Owen Swiney would carry on the combat even longer, December 19, December 29, pitting Wilks and Oldfield against Pinkey and Estcourt, and letting London decide at long last who was who in this contest that had known no parallel.

The rival seasons were so exciting that the actors hardly missed the man over whose work the strife was fought. Nightly Farquhar was accustomed to visit the stage-door; it was his life, his food and drink. There was, the players at length said to one another, all the more reason why an author should look in upon an additional comedy of

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

managers, superimposed, a battle being waged by them about his own. He did not come. Finally Bob Wilks, after two months, alarmed at the prolonged absence of his friend, called about the middle of December, at York Buildings. He found out only that Farquhar had disappeared, and that nobody knew whither he had gone.

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT CAME FROM

Lichfield

ROBERT WILKS, acting in a play whose prologue his most valued friend had just written, yet prevented from ascertaining the whereabouts of that friend, may well have suffered no little anxiety. But Farquhar had been much too ill to betake himself any distance. Evidently unable to pay his rent in York Buildings, he had merely decamped to a cheaper lodging, a back garret, which he discovered as nearby as round the corner, in St. Martin's Lane. Within a short time of settling in he sent for Bob. This was not long before Christmas; at the selfsame moment recurrent performances of the triumphant *Recruiting Officer* were also being presented at the Haymarket.

Wilks upon climbing to this threadbare garret found a remnant of a man, the man in whose plays he had won celebrity, in a pitiful dither of trying to choose whether to sell his commission or starve. The practical actor at once took Farquhar's mind off these dismal alternatives by urging his friend to write a new play, and to write it speedily enough – as Farquhar usually did write – to bring in the needed relief.

'Write!' exclaimed Farquhar, starting from his chair, 'is it possible that a man can write common sense who is heart-broken, and without a shilling in his pocket?'

The debonair Wilks saw nothing insurmountable in these predicaments. Too well he knew his old companion, however ill; too well he knew the dramatic endowments of George Farquhar, always latent.

'Come, George,' Wilks insisted. 'Banish melancholy. Draw your drama. I will call on you this day week to see it. As an

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

empty pocket may cramp your genius, I desire you will accept of my mite.' He gave him 20 guineas, and went away.

So pervasive an influence did this leading actor of the time exert upon his youthful friend, an ascendancy which, enduring for ten years, outmeasured the influence of any other man, that Farquhar, enfeebled though he was, could nowise ignore a thing that Wilks commanded him to undertake. As it happened, the dramatist did not lack straw to make a brick of. Illness had not engendered idleness; his vibrant mind, at least, was ever at work. 'I can by three hours study,' he had written, 'live one and twenty with satisfaction to myself.' Latterly his diligent study had been nothing less than a pamphlet famous for two generations, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, by John Milton. Farquhar now conceived the rather startling innovation of making use of some of it in a play.

But why had he been reading that pamphlet? Had it not some bearing on his own domestic grievances, as indeed it had on Milton's? Farquhar was certainly not very happy with his wife; possibly he determined to relieve his feelings on that score by reading what Milton had to say. There is at this stage renewed reason to believe that Margaret Pemell had married Farquhar rather more than he had married her, that this much older woman, dazzled by the applauded creator of Sir Harry Wildair, had run after Farquhar, worn him down, exhausted him, and worst of all, let him believe that she possessed income sufficient for herself and her children regardless of any funds he might earn as well. Not content to link up with his chain of mistresses, this eager widow wanted Farquhar for a husband. She accomplished her end. But their three subsequent years more or less together had only produced, rather than additional income, two additional children.

Whenever Farquhar had got away from this lady, whether to Dublin or to Shrewsbury, he had been able to enjoy life. Back in London, ill, shackled, penniless, sick at heart, he could under the multiple burden of his family have only felt his besetting ailment aggravated. Whether when he fled from York Buildings and kept his destination secret he

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

at the same time fled from his wife does not appear. What is apparent is that Margaret Farquhar had failed to ease the struggle which her husband was now making just to live, had failed, even, to alleviate his despondency. That was left for Robert Wilks to do. Had Farquhar told him that he, Farquhar, was 'heart-broken'? It was a curious word to use. But to whom, other than his inadequate wife, could he have been referring?

The autobiographical element in creative writing may be uncertain, misleading, tempting one to draw easy but inaccurate conclusions. But this is truer of almost any author than it is of Farquhar. One cannot say that the accident of a visit from Wilks, whilst Farquhar was possibly letting his fancy play upon the justice of a divorce for himself, caused the dramatist to divert his ruminations from the courts to the stage. Nevertheless, it was fortunate that in this question he was at the moment possessed of a requisite which has been laid down for whoever would write greatly: 'the pressure' on his mind of something strongly thought or believed'.

Farquhar got down to his task: to indicate for Wilks, within a week, the framework of the whole play. As if meditating upon the history of his own dramatic writing, even from 1698, when he took a translation from the French of Furetière, spun it into *Adventures of Govent Garden*, then wrote a play quite irrelevant to it, and after that, reverted to the material of the *Adventures*, and turned it into a second comedy much better than the first one, so now, consciously or unconsciously, he carried out this sequence a second time. Into the country he had gone with the playlet of *La Chapelle*, and made of it *The Stage-Coach*, its locale a way-side inn of the midlands. Leaving aside this very good starting-point for a five-act comedy, he had then written *The Recruiting Officer*, in the country indeed, but otherwise as different from *The Stage-Coach* as the *Jubilee* differed from *Love and a Bottle*. Now here, in his mind at the present moment, Farquhar had in *The Stage-Coach* the hint of a new play quite as promising as those *Adventures* which furnished the stuff of the *Jubilee*. Out of his familiarity with Shrewsbury he had just fashioned his most recent success. Why

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

not repeat the experiment on the basis of his knowledge of Lichfield?

The scenes were ready-made: an inn, like the old George at which he had lodged in Lichfield, and a charming country house, like Sir Michael Biddulph's, the house at Elmhurst. For characters, to begin with, the landlord of that inn, John Harrison, was admirable, and so was his winsome daughter; with regard to servants, Thomas Bond, the comic servant to Sir Michael, was much too amusing to go unused. Something might be done, too, with Lady Biddulph, as a local luminary. Did the characters in *The Stage-Coach* offer anything? There was the young lady from London, Isabella, whose uncle wanted her to marry a rich booby in the country, Nicodemus Somebody, and go and live in his country house. Farquhar had rescued her for Captain Basil, and from her family, by contriving with a bit of his own invention that her papers which established her dowry be filched from the custody of hostile hands. Here, to be sure, was a snatch of transferable plot, lending itself to elaboration.

One of Farquhar's stronger inventive faculties had always been his ability to vary, in successive plays, his groups of characters. In *The Recruiting Officer* he had three men involved with two women. Now he decided upon four men with two women, the men being two fortune-hunting beaux from London, Aimwell and Archer; a French officer who was a prisoner in Lichfield, Count Bellair; and the husband of one of the women, Mr. Sullen, a country blockhead and sot. The wife of Sullen, like Isabella in *The Stage-Coach*, was to be also a Londoner, but, less fortunate than Isabella, who escaped from Nicodemus before he could marry her, she must in this play devise a means of separation from an impossible husband, who should be equally desirous of getting rid of her. It was into this situation precisely that Farquhar would introduce certain of Milton's views on divorce.

Here was something that neither Wycherley nor Congreve had ever dreamed of touching, and even Vanbrugh dared only insinuate. Farquhar knew his Vanbrugh line for line, knew especially, from his earliest impressions after arriving

in London these ten long years gone by, *The Relapse*, and *The Provoked Wife*. Vanbrugh had made Berinthia, in *The Relapse*, the antithesis of her husband; but the man was happily dead when the play opened. In *The Provoked Wife*, Sir John and Lady Brute infinitely detested each other, but did not agree to go to the courts for relief. It now seemed proper to Farquhar, and necessary for the good of the public, to reach boldly beyond all precedent in Restoration comedy, and to bring the concrete discussion of divorce upon the stage.

The other young woman in the play, Dorinda, was for the purposes of unity to be half-sister to Mr. Sullen, but unlike him. Which lady was to get which man, and how? In working out the answer, Farquhar decided to develop a stratagem, *The Beaux Stratagem*. The second strand of action, quite as refreshing as the recruiting motive which had sustained Sergeant Kite, was to be complicity between the innkeeper, Boniface, and a trio of highwaymen, Gibbet, Hounslow, and Bagshot, all of them plotting to rob the house of Lady Bountiful (Lady Biddulph), mother of Sullen and Dorinda. (Lady Biddulph's own household, he may have recalled, consisted of children of two marriages.) To round out the comedy Farquhar added two lively servants: Cherry, the innkeeper's daughter (corresponding to Dolly, in *The Stage-Coach*), but suspected of having had a father other than Boniface; and Scrub, servant to Sullen, Scrub whose 'abundant simplicity concealed his cunning', a servant taken bodily from Thomas Bond, who had so beguiled Farquhar's visits to Elmhurst.

The author was now in every sense working feverishly. Having 'drawn his drama' within the time allowed, that is, its outline, as Wilks requested him to do, he submitted it. Wilks, and likewise Owen Swiney of the Haymarket, evidently approved the very engaging plot of the *Stratagem* as swiftly as Bernard Lintot had accepted *The Recruiting Officer*, almost sight unseen. Thus was the labour laid down for George Farquhar to get on with, over this Christmas and New Year of 1706-7, and to fill in, with all his best, the dialogue of this new comedy, the tragedy of which was that he had to write most of it in sick-bed.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

If from outside he heard the news of the theatre, it may have cheered him on: when *The Platonic Lady* of Susanna Centlivre was published, that prologue he had written for it was printed as 'By *Captain Farquhar*'. Had he won the promotion in the Army he had spent so much upon recruits to get? True or false, it sounded well. Again, the two theatres were still battling with each other over *The Recruiting Officer*, Wilks and Oldfield at the Haymarket on December 28, Pinkey and Estcourt at Drury Lane on January 2. Seldom had London known a theatrical tussle so mooted, so tenacious, so drawn out, between its favourites, all of whom enjoyed many of the same followers. Farquhar, as a dramatist, was in demand, and nobody knew that better than Robert Wilks. It was what Farquhar called the 'friendly and indefatigable care' of Wilks, in connection with the new play now taking shape, that inspired the author to his topmost effort.

He wrote his first act in one swift scene, at the inn, Lichfield, introducing Tom Aimwell (Farquhar himself), and Frank Archer, the latter posing as Aimwell's servant, these two gentlemen-adventurers exchanging words with the equally scheming Boniface and Cherry. But at the very start, Farquhar could not repress giving voice to something of his own indigent bitterness:

ARCH: Don't mistake me, Aimwell, for 'tis still my maxim, that there is no scandal like rags, nor any crime so shameful as poverty. . . .

AIM: But did you observe poor Jack Generous in the Park last week?

ARCH: Yes, with his autumnal perriwig, shading his melancholy face, his coat older than anything but its fashion, with one hand idle in his pocket, and with the other picking his useless teeth; and tho' the Mall was crowded with company, yet was poor Jack as single and solitary as a lion in a desert.

AIM: And as much avoided, for no crime upon earth but the want of money.

The intent of Aimwell and Archer, from which the stratagem was to evolve, was to pick up a rich wife for the one and money for them both. A military tincture was again

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

an ingredient: if their fortune-hunting failed, off they could go to the wars. 'We'll embark for Holland,' said Archer, 'bid adieu to Venus, and welcome Mars'. Meanwhile, posing as master and man, they were to take turnabout from town to town until successful.

In Archer's description of himself, though Farquhar was to be Aimwell, there was something of Farquhar too, as he had written it in *The Picture*, and a good deal of the typical Farquhar hero:

'Give me a man that keeps his five senses keen and bright as his sword, that has 'em always drawn out in their just order and strength, with his reason as commanded at the head of 'em, that detaches 'em by turns upon whatever party of pleasure agreeably offers, and commands 'em to retreat upon the least appearance of disadvantage or danger. For my part, I can stick to my bottle while my wine, my company, and my reason holds good. I can be charmed with Sappho's singing without falling in love with her face. I love hunting, but would not, like Actaeon, be eaten up by my own dogs; I love a fine house, but let another keep it; and just so I love a fine woman.' Here, too, was rather more than an echo of Sir Frederick Frolick, in Etherege's well-remembered 'Love in a Tub'.

To get themselves a reputation, Aimwell gave Boniface for safekeeping a sealed box, which he told him contained £200. Then Farquhar whipped in with his satire. Boniface and Cherry promptly assessed Aimwell 'so much a gentleman every way that he must be a highwayman'. The innkeeper planned to apply the principle of second thief best owner. Then the act ended with a tit-for-tat overture to seduction between Archer and Cherry, speeding up to only three or four words in a line, like the dialogue of Fetch and Dolly in *The Stage-Coach*. Comedy of manners? Comedy of wit? Farquhar could not wait for such trimmings. He was creating action, character, human nature, a finished thing. In St. Martin's Lane spun a potter's wheel, high above the street, in a dingy garret.

Act II moved from the inn to Lady Bountiful's house, just as in *The Recruiting Officer* he had shifted from the market place to Melinda's, and now he painted Mrs. Sullen and

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Dorinda as he had there done Melinda and Silvia. But in the *Stratagem* Farquhar drilled his characterizing considerably deeper. He turned to the third scene of the third act of *The Provoked Wife*, that comedy of Vanbrugh's which had so captivated him upon his arrival in London nearly ten years before:

LADY BRUTE: Sure it's late, Belinda. I begin to be sleepy.

BEL: Yes, 'tis near twelve. Will you go to bed?

LADY B: To bed, my dear? And by that time I am fallen into a sweet sleep (or perhaps a sweet dream, which is better and better), Sir John will come home, roaring drunk, and be overjoyed he finds me in a condition to be disturbed. . . . What hogs men are, Belinda, when they grow weary of women. . . .

This was the cue. Upon it, Farquhar built his much improved picture of the connubial felicity of the Sullens. Mrs. Sullen thus etched her husband:

'O sister, sister! If ever you marry, beware of a sullen silent sot, one that's always musing, but never thinks. There's some diversion in a talking blockhead, and since a woman must wear chains, I would have the pleasure of hearing 'em rattle a little. . . . He came home this morning at his usual hour of four, wakened me out of a sweet dream . . . by tumbling over the tea-table, which he broke all to pieces. After his man and he had rolled about the room like sick passengers in a storm he comes flounce into bed, dead as a salmon in a fishmonger's basket, his feet cold as ice, his breath hot as a furnace, and his hands and his face as greasy as his flannel night-cap. Oh, matrimony! He tosses up the clothes with a barbarous swing over his shoulders, disorders the whole economy of my bed, leaves me half naked, and my whole night's comfort is the tuneful serenade of that wakeful nightingale, his nose.'

A passage like that was progressive illumination, almost a farewell to Vanbrugh. Unlike him, Farquhar did not toy with words; he made them work. From 'tumbling', 'rolled', 'tosses', 'swing', from 'flounce', 'salmon', 'furnace', 'half naked', he drew magic.

Such words it was that trumpeted the later entrance of

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

Sullen in person. He and his servant Scrub came in together, rather a taciturn pair when in each other's company. After a few snarls from Sullen, and his exit, Mrs. Sullen confided to Dorinda that she must either get him to London, where she might tame him, or promote her flirtation in Lichfield with Count Bellair, the French officer. But, contrary to the stock wife of Restoration comedy, Mrs. Sullen assured her sister that she would 'not go a step beyond the bounds of honour'. It being Sunday, the two ladies then set out for church.

Immediately in the next scene Aimwell was designing to single out a beauty in the congregation of that church, and so start his affair. Farquhar needed here to recall merely his own experience at the church in London, when he found his 'little lady in a half-mourning mantua and a deep morning complexion'. If that lady turned out to be Margaret Pemell, he could have scant joy in the recollection; but for the purposes of a play, the tactics of striking up an acquaintance were the same. Then the scene rippled along with the introduction of Gibbet the highwayman, in confederacy with Boniface and Cherry, the trio planning to squeeze information from Archer, as servant, about Aimwell.

All was going well with the stratagem of the beaux when upon a sudden the author dropped his pen.

Painfully, this merriest of dramatists in all the Restoration calendar, this young master of his craft so incapable of mastery over himself, this brave spirit who had so manfully bent to his supreme piece of work, had now, after such a promising start with his plot, scenes, contrasts, movement, to bring his writing to an abrupt stop. Not having finished even Act II, he is said to have 'felt death upon him'.

In a way, the plight of George Farquhar was like that of Tamerlane, in front of whom, at the end, Marlowe said that death 'stood aiming at him with his murdering dart'. Of Farquhar it is reported that he '*perceived* the approaches of death'. But unlike the oriental warrior, Farquhar might not so readily frighten away that stealthy spectre by a look. In the garret, whoever was in attendance during this 'lingering and expensive' illness may not have been too cheering: one account relates that Farquhar was at this point 'told to give up hope'.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

It is difficult to believe that his malady was other than tuberculosis. If in these fragile weeks Farquhar did not often display the harrowing optimism of victims of that disease, he did, like many poets who had suffered from it, manifest its hectic accelerated activity of mind so conducive, so impelling, to literary invention. He would not give in. The momentum he had gained in the writing of this full-bodied comedy must not let him stop for long. He may indeed have felt death pulling him one way; but life in the other direction was patently disputing the issue.

If ever optimism like that of a consumptive emerged from a patient, it did appear, silently, when Farquhar resumed the writing of this play, to finish off his second act with a humorous dialogue of such high spirits, between Archer and Cherry, that none would have believed its author was not abounding in the health of Homer's very human younger gods:

ARCH: Come, my dear, have you conned over the catechism I taught you last night?

CHER: Come, question me.

ARCH: What is love?

CHER: Love is I know not what, it comes I know not how, and goes I know not when.

ARCH: Very well, an apt scholar. (*Chucks her under the chin.*) Where does love enter?

CHER: Into the eyes.

ARCH: And where go out?

CHER: I won't tell ye.

ARCH: What are the objects of that passion?

CHER: Youth, beauty, and clean linen.

ARCH: The reason?

CHER: The first two are fashionable in nature, and the third at Court.

ARCH: That's my dear. What are the signs and tokens of that passion?

CHER: A stealing look, a stammering tongue, words improbable, designs impossible, and actions impracticable.

ARCH: That's my good child. Kiss me. — What must a lover do to obtain his mistress?

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

CHER: He must adore the person that disdains him, he must bribe the chambermaid that betrays him, and court the footman that laughs at him. He must, he must --

ARCH: Nay, child, I must whip you if you don't mind your lesson. He must treat his --

CHER: O, ay, he must treat his enemies with respect, his friends with indifference, and all the world with contempt. He must suffer much, and fear more. He must desire much, and hope little. In short, he must embrace his ruin, and throw himself away.

ARCH: Had ever man so hopeful a pupil as mine? . . .

And so in a few more lines to the end of 'Love's Catechism', when Cherry kissed him again. What Archer derived from this little flirtation was that Cherry, having overheard a plot of Gibbet and Boniface, warned Archer to beware of her father. 'So,' Archer concluded, 'we're like to have as many adventures in our inn as Don Quixote had in his.'

This was the bottom of Farquhar's inspiration, Cervantes, of whom La Chapelle had reminded him. Having applied the tempo of Cervantes to *The Stage-Coach*, the apt young dramatist was now bringing it to bear in the *Stratagem*. It was a distinct transfusion, a new departure, for English prose literature.

Nor did the author's wonderful spirit flag. He galloped into his third act, a scene between Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda, as if he had never drawn rein. He opened it with a hearty laugh, the two young women merrily relating their ogling of Aimwell in the church, then summoning Scrub to lure to Lady Bountiful's house the strange footman Archer, whom they would cross-examine about his supposed master Aimwell. When in the next scene the two beaux in turn discussed the young women, Aimwell revealed that he was smitten with Dorinda. There was now no question of their leaving England, nor even Lichfield, for the wars. As Archer was called away to Lady Bountiful's, Aimwell arranged with the landlord to dine with any other company at the inn. These turned out to be Gibbet and a new character, Foigard, who was chaplain to the French officers, and was an Irishman pretending to be a Continental.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Just as Farquhar had drawn upon living originals for Boniface and Scrub, Cherry and Lady Bountiful, so he took Foigard from life. The Irish servant Teague, in *The Twin Rivals*, and the Irishman Macahone, in *The Stage-Coach*, had both gone down well with audiences, Farquhar naturally having found the Irish accent easy to write and Irish humour ready upon his pen. Now, not stopping to *create* a third Irishman, he hit upon the character he sought in one Fogourdy, who was known in England as far back as the early years of the Restoration. Samuel Pepys, in February 1664, made this note of him: 'Home, whither came one Father Fogourdy, an Irish priest, of my wife's and mother's acquaintance in France – a sober and discreet person, but one that I would not have converse with my wife, nor meddling with her religion'. Farquhar took this man, though making him not so 'discreet' but that he was a considerable liar, 'born in Brussels, educated in France, and a subject of the King of Spain, dear Joy'. Foigard fitted very well into the company of Boniface and Gibbet, if not of Aimwell, and he added fresh interest to the plot.

But it was in the final scene of this act that the dramatist really extended himself. The plot beautifully moved forward. Into the New Year of 1707 George Farquhar worked on, sound mind in sick body, as if the brisk play of his fancy mocked his stricken flesh and blood. The scene was in Lady Bountiful's house. Scrub, bibulous with Archer, was reciting the scandal: he feared Foigard had ousted him in the heart of Gipsev the maid; he feared Mrs. Sullen was getting off with the French Count Bellair; only Dorinda was above reproach. The two young ladies entered. Very skilfully, by questions about the life of a footman, by a clever song, a 'Song of a Trifle', demanded of Archer, Farquhar let them discover that here was no footman, and while Dorinda put the eternal feminine query, whether Aimwell was married, Mrs. Sullen veered toward replacing Count Bellair, in her affections, with Archer.

At this turn the play became action rather than conversation. Count Bellair entered; he was another new character who increased the suspense. Mrs. Sullen saw him alone. He tried to woo her. They both disparaged Sullen. As Sullen

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

unexpectedly burst in with sword drawn, his wife pointed a pistol at him, declaring she would defend herself with it against both men. Sullen shouted he cared only for *his* honour, not hers. Going off, he told Mrs. Sullen he would let her flirt with anybody but a Frenchman. She was well satisfied with that. She then informed Bellair that she considered herself not his conquest, but his amusement merely. Upon this congé, the Count retorted that her virtue exceeded her honesty.

Then Farquhar got down to the question that was really on his mind: what to do with a man and wife who were mutually and hopelessly antipathetic. To all appearances, on such meagre evidence as does exist, a certain degree of antipathy had for some time been verily the position between himself and Margaret Farquhar. Writing even from his death-bed, poor Farquhar could no less write with feeling, with expostulation, if he had been bored, soured, beaten down by domestic wrangling. But how was he to write dialogue about divorce, this quite new thing in Restoration comedy? It must sound convincing, and he had no experience of it. He had been reading both the prose and the poetry of John Milton; his head was full of him. Even in the previous scene of this act, when Aimwell and Archer were discussing their adventures of the heart, Farquhar had foreshadowed what he was going to do. In the sonorous Miltonic manner he let Archer suggest his affair brewing with Cherry:

The Nymph that with her twice two hundred pounds,
With brazen Engine hot, and Quoif clear starched
Can fire the Guest in warming of the Bed. . . .

There's a touch of sublime Milton for you, and the subject but an innkeeper's daughter. . . .

Now about to write a scene between Sullen and his wife, Farquhar opened his copy of Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, and read this in Book II: 'Nay, instead of being one flesh, they will be rather two carcasses chained unnaturally together, or, as it may happen, a living soul bound to a dead corpse. . . .' These phrases Farquhar thus transcribed:

SULL: You're impertinent.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

MRS. S: I was ever so, since I became one flesh with you.

SULL: One flesh! rather two carcasses joined unnaturally together.

MRS. S: Or rather a living soul coupled to a dead body.

Farquhar then had to build up a scene in which Mrs. Sullen persuaded Dorinda that unnatural wedlock was not to be borne. So, he read on in Milton: 'Natural hatred, whenever it arises, is a greater evil in marriage than the accident of adultery, a greater defrauding, a greater injustice. . . . They (men) would be juster in their balancing between natural hatred and casual adultery, this being but a transient injury, and soon amended . . . but that other being an unspeakable and unremitting sorrow and offence. . . . To forbid dislike against the guiltless instinct of nature is not within the province of any law to reach. . . . God . . . (did not) authorize a judicial court to toss about and divulge the unaccountable and secret reason of disaffection between man and wife, as a thing most improperly answerable to any such kind of trial. . . . The radical and innocent affection of nature . . . is not within the diocese of the law to tamper with. . . . That indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace, is a greater reason of divorce than natural frigidity, especially if there be . . . mutual consent. . . . To couple hatred, therefore, though wedlock try all her golden links, and borrow to her aid all the iron manacles and fetters of the law, it does but seek to twist a rope of sand. . . . But because this is such a secret kind of fraud or theft, as cannot be discovered by law . . . therefore to divorce was never counted a political or civil offence . . . the law can only appoint the just and equal conditions of divorce. . . .'

Out of these promulgations written in 1643, by a man whose wife had left him, Farquhar, in 1707, a man who if he had not already left his wife evidently wanted to, distilled this dialogue:

MRS. SULLEN: . . . should I lie groaning under a yoke I can shake off, I were accessary to my ruin, and my patience were no better than self-murder.

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

- DORINDA: But how can you shake off the yoke? Your divisions don't come within the reach of the law for a divorce.
- MRS. S: Law! What law can search into the remote abyss of nature, what evidence can prove the unaccountable disaffections of wedlock? Can a jury sum up the endless aversions that are rooted in our souls, or can a bench give judgment upon antipathies?
- DOR: They never pretended, sister. They never meddle but in cases of uncleanness.
- MRS. S: Uncleanness! O sister, casual violation is a transient injury, and may possibly be repaired. But can radical hatred be ever reconciled? No, no, sister. Nature is the first lawgiver, and when she has set tempers opposite, not all the golden links of wedlock, nor iron manacles of the law, can keep 'em fast.

Restoration comedy had commonly ended either in reconciliation or in marriage. Was George Farquhar now to set it ablaze by appending divorce to it? Would he out-Vanbrugh Vanbrugh? Here was a cross-current indeed, in the wake of the indispensable John Milton.

With three acts written, Farquhar was over the hill now, and he clearly saw his way to the bottom. The *Stratagem* was more than half finished. On and on through the short January days he wrote, fighting against time, wrestling against death itself, his busy mind by very concentration aloof from his physical fragility, as he lay in his miserable loft in St. Martin's Lane.

The speed of his writing was now in direct ratio to the speed of the plot. The characters now *did* things rather than talked about things done or going to be done. Farquhar dashed off the fourth act all in one scene, continuing it in Lady Bountiful's house, where he brought nearly all of his characters together. As the real 'stratagem' was to unfold, it developed that Archer ran in to beseech Lady Bountiful, 'who cured all her neighbours of all distempers', to attend his master 'Lord' Aimwell, who lay in a swoon at her gate. 'Pray,' pleaded Archer adroitly, 'which is the old lady of you

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

three?' 'Did not I tell you,' said Mrs. Sullen to Dorinda, 'that my Lord would find a way to come at you?' Thenceforth it was a simple matter for Aimwell, even whilst he rallied from his sham fainting fit, to make love to the daughter of the house, since Lady Bountiful invited him to stay until he recovered. This house Farquhar is said to have visualized as in Dean's Walk, which led past the front of the Palace in Lichfield.

Equally Archer improved his time with Mrs. Sullen, though *his* object was not matrimony. When the two young women privately compared notes, it turned out that Aimwell had proposed to Dorinda, while Mrs. Sullen had so fallen into the wiles of Archer that she had sent to London for her brother, Sir Charles Freeman, to help her get rid of her husband. It was not for nothing that Mrs. Sullen's maiden name was Freeman. So far so good. But meantime Foigard, as the accomplice of Count Bellair, had bribed Gipsev to hide the Count in Mrs. Sullen's closet, and Scrub, having overheard this scheme, told his bottle-companion Archer. Confronting Foigard with this, Archer and Aimwell threatened to hang him for an Irish traitor – because he was serving with the enemy French army – unless he conducted Archer, instead of Bellair, to Mrs. Sullen. The climax to the action of this night, now very neatly tied up, was that Boniface, Hounslow, Bagshot, and Gibbet all appeared on the stroke of twelve to rob the house.

Then Farquhar, with the method by which he had adapted *La Chapelle* still in mind, set about making his fifth act a grand *mêlée*, like the last act of *The Stage-Coach*. Less than six weeks was it since Bob Wilks had called at this meanest of rooms, and magisterially bade him forget his misery by 'drawing his drama'. The disconsolate invalid, lifted into endeavour by the force of so persuasive a personality, had to the last ounce of his power obeyed. Once the outline of the play had been pronounced good, Farquhar had written at the rate of an act each week, no plodding pace for a man whose flickering life was being consumed like his ink-and-paper itself. His engine of invention had suffered only that one interruption, then restarted as if with never a pause, and now, as the winter of January ran out its length,

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

George Farquhar drove his pen rapidly toward the end of the work demanded of him.

He needed first a short scene at the inn, to bring on Mrs. Sullen's newly-arrived brother Freeman, who like Foigard and Bellair again deftly tightened up the plot. By chance, in walked sodden Sullen, drunk; he had never hitherto seen his brother-in-law. Farquhar used this meeting, with Boniface the landlord standing by (he having returned from Lady Bountiful's house after showing the robbers the way), to propound further his views on marriage and separation. It was an opportune moment, because Sullen had to explain to Freeman why at that hour of the night he, Sullen, loathed going home to his wife.

Running through both earlier and later sections of the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* than those he had already consulted, Farquhar had ticked these lines: "The solace and satisfaction of the mind is provided for before the sensitive pleasing of the body. . . . This is that rational burning that marriage is to remedy. . . . What can be fouler incongruity, a greater violence to the reverend secret of nature, than to force a mixture of minds that cannot unite? . . . Marriage is a human society . . . if the mind therefore cannot have that due company by marriage that it may reasonably and humanly desire, that marriage can be no human society. . . . The greatest breach (of marriage is) unfitness of mind. . . . There is no true marriage between those who agree not in true consent of mind. . . . The unity of mind is nearer and greater than the union of bodies. . . ."

The borrowing author, having brought his own lines to the point where Sullen for once in his life was fascinated by a human being (Freeman) who had entangled him in talk about marriage, law, and crime, now let Boniface put in an oar:

BON: Pray, sir, as the saying is, let me ask you one question: are not man and wife one flesh?

SIR CH: You and your wife, Mr. Guts, may be one flesh, because ye are nothing else. But rational creatures have minds that must be united.

SUL: Minds.

SIR CH: Ay, minds, sir. Don't you think that the mind takes the place of the body?

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

SUL: In some people.

SIR CH: Then the interest of the master must be consulted before that of his servant.

SUL: Sir, you shall dine with me tomorrow. Oons! I always thought that we were naturally one.

SIR CH: Sir, I know that my two hands are naturally one, because they love one another, kiss one another, help one another in all the actions of life; but I could not say so much if they were always at cuffs.

SUL: Then 'tis plain that we are two.

SIR CH: Why don't you part with her, sir?

SUL: Will you take her, sir?

SIR CH: With all my heart.

SUL: You shall have her tomorrow morning, and a venison-pastry into the bargain.

SIR CH: You'll let me have her fortune too?

SUL: Fortune! Why, sir, I have no quarrel at her fortune. I only hate the woman, sir, and none but the woman shall go.

By this exposition, Farquhar prepared the ground on which Freeman could aid his sister, flouted like Milton the inanity of convention, re-stated Milton's case for reform in the law of divorce, and invited his own forthcoming audience to accept the solution by which the play was to end.

As Freeman and Sullen withdrew to play at whisk, Cherry rushed in to knock up Aimwell, with news that Lady Bountiful's house was being robbed. Thus did Farquhar cleverly bring himself as the hero back to the scene of the imminent dénouement.

Whilst the robbers were about their business in one part of the house, Archer, in the bedchamber of Mrs. Sullen, stepped from her closet. Unlike Aimwell, Archer would have his woman willy-nilly, any woman, from housemaid to mistress, from Cherry to Mrs. Sullen, and none of your scruples about adultery, or virginity, or marriage.

Once more Farquhar turned to Vanbrugh, but this time to *The Relapse*, that other comedy which had so captivated him long since as a tyro in Drury Lane. He now wrote a new version of the scene in Berinthia's chamber (Act IV, Scene 3), in which Loveless pulled the 'softly' protesting Berinthia,

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

in the dark, into her closet, and ravished her offstage. There was this difference in the status of the couples: while Berinthia was a widow, Loveless was another woman's husband; while Archer was a bachelor, Mrs. Sullen was another man's wife. But the important variation written by Farquhar was in the outcome of the incident: responding to the trend of the times, he let the seduction be not consummated, but interrupted.

Archer in this play was the last lingering link with the Restoration, a link that had worn to the verge of snapping. Farquhar, in a much more romantic scene than Vanbrugh could write, gave to Archer the poetic passion of a Romeo; but his young matron of a Juliet, though longing to consent, quite in character screamed murder and thieves. At her outcry, in rushed Scrub, thinking Archer one of the robbers.

By this nimble swerve the author turned Archer from ravisher into protector, for as Gibbet entered and began to collect Mrs. Sullen's jewellery, Archer, concealed, slipped behind and throttled him, and would have killed him on the spot but for extracting the information that two confederates were robbing the other ladies. He thereupon sent Scrub to fetch Foigard from Gipseys's room. Giving Gibbet to them to escort to the cellar, bound, Archer with Mrs. Sullen excitedly clinging to him sped to the aid of Lady Bountiful and Dorinda.

This segment of melodrama was all in the best tradition of *Don Quixote*; but Farquhar carried his action on much livelier wings than he had used in the little hurly-burly outside Dolly's room in *The Stage-Coach*. If Archer and Aimwell were fortune-hunters, they were having to earn their fortunes, which as usual were to favour only the brave.

The arrival of Archer in the other bedchamber was timely enough. He came upon Aimwell having to fight both Hounslow and Bagshot together. But as soon as the combat was two and two, the pair of heroes easily prevailed. They would bind the knaves. 'Here, madam,' said Archer to Mrs. Sullen, 'lend me your garter.' Said she, standing by, 'The devil's in this fellow; he fights, loves, and banters all in a breath.' It was, of course, true that of his two principals

Farquhar had made Archer the devil-may-care. With the robbers vanquished and sent in charge of Scrub to keep company with Gibbet and Foigard below, Archer it was who egged Aimwell on in his suit with Dorinda, even counselling that Foigard be dragged up to tie the knot. 'The priest is in the cellar, and dare not refuse to do the work.' So Farquhar made use again of a reverend gentleman in his cast, just as he had employed the country parson in *The Stage-Coach* to marry Basil and Isabella.

Archer's advice to Aimwell, his swift lesson in how to win a woman by not waiting, was the method of Farquhar himself in his halcyon days, as he recorded it again and again in his letters to Suky, to Chloe, to Penelope. This fevered importunity had in the end hardly won him an heiress. Still, it was a method to be recommended, and was even more impressive in a play than in a letter. A man brave in defending a lady, but faint of heart in courting her, might as well in the opinion of Archer be not brave.

Archer himself had been slightly wounded in the scuffle, was bleeding, and thought himself lucky to be able to make a show of his blood. But when he besought Mrs. Sullen to put him to bed, she, fearful from his recent passionate appeal, shied off. As he was rebuking her for ingratitude, the arrival in Lichfield of her brother Freeman was announced. Archer, whom Freeman had known in London as a bit of an adventurer, was dismayed. 'Sdeath and hell!' exclaimed Archer. 'My old acquaintance! Now unless Aimwell has made good use of his time, all our fair machine goes souse into the sea like the Eddystone.'

It was a habit of Farquhar to complicate his plays at the end with minor hitches. Though this practice bound up the suspense, it made for some confusion. Now reaching his final scene, he proceeded to tangle and disentangle at once his two pairs of lovers. Honest Aimwell confessed to Dorinda that he was not Lord Aimwell, merely his brother. Archer at this grew furious. But Dorinda came in to say that Freeman had just brought tidings of Lord Aimwell's death in London. When Archer insisted, by reason of the prior agreement, on half of Dorinda's fortune, Aimwell, now come into a fortune of his own, refused it, but said take either all

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

the money or the lady. He calmed the protesting Dorinda by saying he knew well that Archer would choose the money.

The case of Archer was resolved by Sir Charles Freeman, who joined the company to intimate that he intended to part his sister from Sullen. All agreed, including Count Bellair, to assist him. As Sullen came in, he raised no objection, but consented to talk matters over with his wife, and there and then the fond couple engaged in a rapid repartee of mutual aversion. It was not new. This, too, Farquhar took over from Vanbrugh (*The Relapse*, Act II, Scene 1), from the speech of Berinthia in which she enumerated her differences with regard to the character of her late husband. For example,

He eating and drinking, I carding and playing:
He the sound of a horn, I the squeak of a fiddle. . . .

Farquhar, improving as he always did upon his model, heightened the realism by making the husband and wife actually speak these lines at each other:

MRS. S: In the first place I can't drink ale with him.

SUL: Nor can I drink tea with her.

MRS. S: I can't hunt with you.

SUL: Nor can I dance with you.

MRS. S: I hate cocking and racing.

SUL: I abhor ombre and picquet. . . .

And so on, culminating in an agreement to separate. Yet Sullen still refused to give up his wife's dowry of £10,000. Count Bellair offered to pay a dowry and take Mrs. Sullen away; but when he found how much the sum amounted to in French money his amorous desires petered out. Then Archer, to the surprise of the company, himself offered to hand over such a sum:

'Then I will. This night's adventure has proved strangely lucky to us all, for Captain Gibbet in his walk had made bold, Mr. Sullen, with your study and escritoire, and had taken out all the writings of your estate, all the articles of marriage with this lady, bills, bonds, leases, receipts, to an infinite value. I took 'em from him, and I deliver them to Sir Charles.'

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

In this wise Farquhar borrowed again, but from his own part of *The Stage-Coach*, the present instance being the device of seizing the writings from one who withheld them against the will of their beneficiary, as in the case of Isabella recapturing her papers from her Uncle Micher. But Farquhar, by making Gibbet the unwitting conveyor, much enlivened the scheme.

For one other bit he drew upon his own *Recruiting Officer*: as he had there taken care of Rose, the country wench, by giving her into the service of Silvia, so now he accounted for his last loose end by having Archer turn over Cherry as maid to Dorinda.

The curtain of this lively week-end in Lichfield was to come down on a dance led by Archer and Mrs. Sullen. But staid John Milton was to be a part of the dance as well, Milton who declared that consent of both parties mutually given was a sufficient cause for divorce. So seriously was Farquhar dealing with this proposition that to the very end of the play he would summon to his support none other than a serious author. If the audience knew not that Milton was speaking, they should know at least that the last stark word in the *Stratagem* was upon the subject of righteous divorce.

The dramatist for the third time dipped into his *Doctrine and Discipline*, this time some pages farther on in the tract than hitherto: 'There is no power above their own consent to hinder them from unjoining. . . . There can be nothing in the equity of law why divorce by consent may not be lawful. . . . Not he who puts away by mutual consent commits adultery.' Upon these precepts, Farquhar wrote the last speech, and a quatrain, in *The Beaux Stratagem*, to be spoken by Archer to the sound of music:

'Twould be hard to guess which of these parties is the better pleased, the couple joined, or the couple parted. The one rejoicing in hopes of an untasted happiness, and the other in their deliverance from an experienced misery.'

Both happy in their several states we find
Those parted by consent, and those conjoined.
Consent, if mutual, saves the lawyer's fee;
Consent is law enough to set you free.

WHAT CAME FROM LICHFIELD

The great task, seeming so utterly impossible of fulfilment, was done. George Farquhar still lived, though how, in the face of his exertions, was past understanding. He had no strength to revise his manuscript, as he longed to do, but having designated which actors he wished cast for the several parts he sent it, late in January, to the endeared friend for whom he had written the character of Archer: Robert Wilks, at the Haymarket.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LAST

First Night

A RAPID reading of *The Beaux Stratagem* by Wilks, Swiney, and Bernard Lintot won their triple enthusiasm. Lintot was generous in a material way, no doubt in part from pity for the dramatist who had so gallantly striven against time, pain, even death itself: on January 27, 1707, the bookseller doubled the copy-money for the play to £30; and he paid the sorely-pressed Farquhar in advance.

It was a further sign of the financial desperation of the author, a measure of the corroding worries to which his 'expensive' illness had driven him, that contrary to his recent practice he reverted to the forlorn hope of dedicating a play to a nobleman. The man Farquhar pitched upon was that compatriot who as a lad of fifteen had been a cornet at the Battle of the Boyne, and who had also served in Holland with King William when Farquhar was there: Earl Cadogan.

As the Colonel of Cadogan's Horse the Earl was a hero of Blenheim and Ramillies, and was now in England for the winter, quartering the confederated troops of the different nationalities. A big, burly Irishman in a light-coloured wig, and with silver armour over a scarlet uniform, Cadogan was a beau-soldier, who liked to appear at parties rich in jewels. But he was rash, impetuous; he believed the pen should be shaken almost as fiercely as the sword. What may have prompted Farquhar, aside from their community in arms, to seek the Earl as a patron was a reputation that, while not wholly dependable in anyone, was yet a hope: Cadogan was known to be lavish of promises.

But Farquhar really could have made no claim on grounds of friendship, and the unhappy upshot was that the Earl

THE LAST FIRST NIGHT

evaded the compliment of having *The Beaux Stratagem* inscribed to him. It should be said for Cadogan, however, that he did make the pitiable author a present, and – though it was a thing easy enough to do in the circumstances – promised him future favour. Doubtless Farquhar was thankful for the gift. As for the promise, it must have poignantly reminded him of a stanza he had written into the ‘Song of a Trifle’, to be sung by Archer in the third act:

‘But if you will go to the place
Where trifles abundantly breed,
The levée will show you his Grace
Makes promises trifles indeed. . . .’

Possibly Farquhar here was recording the vain appeal he had made to the Duke of Ormonde, to which appeal the only help extended was a suggestion that the insolvent Lieutenant sell his commission.

The problem of a dedication thus remained unanswered, whilst Swiney and Wilks, selecting in February a goodly assemblage of ‘Farquhar actors’, made ready for rehearsals. On the other side of the preparations, Lintot was in a rush to set up the *Stratagem*, because he had determined upon the unusual course of publishing it almost as soon as the very opening of the play. The prostrate author was daily growing weaker. Not only was he quite unable to make any further effort to obtain a patron, but he seemingly lacked the strength to provide even a preface, which he was so fond of writing for his comedies. Still, Farquhar usually liked to deal in prefaces with his critics, and Lintot was allowing him no time for that. It is, of course, possible that the needy writer was persuaded to forgo such a preface on the ground that publication simultaneous with the opening of the *Stratagem* would help ensure earlier benefit performances.

Of the fourteen parts cast by Swiney and Wilks for this comedy, nine went to actors who had earlier played Farquhar. Mills was to be Aimwell, and Wilks to be Archer, while Keen got the role of Freeman, and Bullock that of Boniface the landlord. Colley Cibber, having only belatedly deserted Christopher Rich to join his old comrades at the Haymarket, was offered Scrub. But the famous Captain

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Brazen, 'and so forth, my dear' (*The Recruiting Officer* was presented yet again at the Haymarket on February 10) could not quite see himself as a servant; he declined the part. Whereupon they let him create another kind of captain, the highwayman Captain Gibbet. It was just as well that the character of Scrub went to the natural man for it, 'Dicky' Norris. William Bowen, who was Teague in *The Twin Rivals*, was to be Foigard. New actors were John Bowman, of Betterton's company, as Bellair, and John Verbruggen, 'a bit in-kneed, which gave him a shambling gait', as Sullen. With regard to the women, an event in itself was the casting of Anne Oldfield for Mrs. Sullen. To play Lady Bountiful Mrs. Powel, who had so competently done Lady Darling in the *Jubilee*, was chosen. Mrs. Mills, though she had not appeared in Farquhar since she played Trudge, the whore in *Love and a Bottle*, was to be Gipsev. The new women were Mrs. Bradshaw as Dorinda; and Mrs. Bicknell, both an actress and a dancer, from Drury Lane, as Cherry. Except for the minor bits of Hounslow and Bagshot, this list completed the cast for Farquhar's first play at the Haymarket. Meanwhile, at Drury Lane, on February 20, Dick Estcourt reaped a benefit performance of *The Recruiting Officer*.

As the rehearsals at the Haymarket struck their stride, the loyal Bob Wilks did not forget him who had furnished the material for them. Repeatedly he walked over from the busy theatre to the lonely garret in the Lane. He was elated, confident of what his company were going to make of the *Stratagem*, and Farquhar had no reason to doubt a success brewing. The thing which the young author did despair of was his unremitting illness. 'My life,' he said resignedly, 'will be of shorter duration than the run of this play.' Wilks tried again, by discussing points that came up in rehearsals, to take his poor friend's mind off that lugubrious subject. Anne Oldfield, said Wilks, feared George had dealt too freely with the character of Mrs. Sullen, in giving her to Archer without such a proper divorce 'as might be a security to her honour'. (This compunction on the part of a player seemed a long way off from the ethics of the Restoration.) But Farquhar had his answer ready: it was a com-

THE LAST FIRST NIGHT

pound of grim humour and fatalism, with perhaps an echo of his domestic infelicity: 'To salve that,' he replied, 'I'll get a real divorce, marry her myself, and give her my bond she shall be a real widow in less than a fortnight.'

London was kept informed about the oncoming *Stratagem* by way of the columns of the *Daily Courant*. In February this paper announced that 'a new comedy written by Mr. Farquhar' would be 'speedily acted', and that when acted, it would be 'printed for Bernard Lintot'. On March 5 the *Courant* stated that the opening performance was set for the following Saturday, the 8th.

If any reason be sought for choosing that particular date, it may possibly be found in the historic fact that on March 6 Queen Anne gave her consent, at long last, to the union of England with Scotland. Managers of theatres were quick to make capital of such events by celebrating them with the first night of a new play, into the prologue of which they could write a topical reference. The prologue to *The Beaux Stratagem*, to be spoken by Wilks, was evidently written in haste between March 6 and 8. So pacific an occurrence was the welding of the two parts of Britain that some apology was thought to be appropriate for presenting a satirical comedy:

When through Great Britain's fair extensive round,
The trumps of fame the notes of union sound,
When Anna's sceptre points the laws their course,
And her example gives her precepts force,
There scarce is room for satire. . . .

But as tares and poppies rose among the corn, so 'fools of twenty summers', nature's favourite plants, shot up and vegetated, and since they yielded diversion, if nothing else, it had to be staged:

Follies tonight we show ne'er lashed before,
Yet such as nature shows you every hour,
Nor can the pictures give a just offence,
For fools are made for jests to men of sense.

In juxtaposition to the prologue, in the book of the play, Farquhar contented himself with a few lines of 'advertisement' instead of a preface. It was perhaps a comfort that he could do so, little as it was, on the basis of an assurance from Wilks and others that the *Stratagem* would to a certainty

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

heighten the fame of its author. 'The Reader,' Farquhar modestly wrote in this advertisement, 'may find some faults in this play, which my illness prevented the amending of; but there is great amends made in the representation, which cannot be matched, no more than the friendly and indefatigable care of Mr. Wilks, to whom I owe chiefly the success of the play'. This was the last word of George Farquhar, on the subject of any play of his, to be printed.

It was in the final act of *The Inconstant* that the author, expressing his own ambition, had made Young Mirabel say, 'I could wish that my whole life long were the first night of a new play'. The tragedy of Farquhar, yet his triumph, was that his own greatest first night adorned his life only when he was dying. In particular, the acting of Wilks and Oldfield – in such refreshing characters as Archer and Mrs. Sullen – made March 8, 1707, a date memorable in the history of British drama. Though the ablest performance in the entire career of Wilks had been in the part of Sir Harry Wildair, his Archer was an overlapping second to it. There was no mistaking the validity of the applause, which indeed attested that the epilogue was less necessary as an appeal for approval than it was as a thing of sorrow:

If to our play your judgment can't be kind,
Let its expiring author pity find.
Survey his mournful case with melting eyes,
Nor let the bard be damned before he dies;
Forbear you fair on his last scene to frown,
But his true exit with a plaudit crown;
Then shall the dying author cease to fear
The dreadful knell, while your applause he hears. . . .

Yet this first night at the Haymarket was not without its critics. In the audience sat Captain Dick Steele, who himself was enjoying the prestige of having seen in the same theatre only ten days before, on February 25, a revival of his own most applauded comedy, *The Tender Husband*. It was a play two years old, whose first-night cast had included nearly half the actors now in the *Stratagem*: Wilks, Mills, Bullock, Norris, Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Powel. Steele was a shrewd and pointful judge of comedy; he knew the capabilities of these players, how to get the best out of them, how to shape up a play to its most effective proportions.

THE LAST FIRST NIGHT

He recommended cutting 'Love's Catechism', the scene between Archer and Cherry in the second act, probably on the ground that it slowed up the advance of the plot; he advised omitting also a scene between Boniface and Gibbet at the beginning of Act V, a scene which made that long act a bit too drawn out. Steele's advice was listened to. In the eight subsequent performances arranged for the month's time after the opening – the third, on March 13, being Farquhar's benefit – Wilks and Swiney agreed to delete those scenes.

Otherwise the *Stratagem* as written played on in its conquering course. Not the least of its strong points, still another hint, perhaps, taken by Farquhar from *The Stage-Coach*, was that it nowhere brought on a character in disguise. It was the first full-length comedy by this author so to be distinguished. (The intermittent pose of Archer as footman involved no change of costume.) To do away with that facile but unconvincing device, bothersome to the audience and not too helpful to the actor involved, was itself a leap forward.

But it was the boldness of the moral in the *Stratagem* that broadly pleased the town. This play, to the astonishment of everyone bred on Wycherley and Congreve, had made morality actually an engaging theme. Had Jeremy Collier proved victor at last? Young George Farquhar had launched his own rather bawdy early works just in time to escape the whip of that lashing parson. Then, beginning with *The Twin Rivals*, and to an increasing degree as he produced his later comedies, he had almost broken away from the taint of the age of Charles II. On the other hand, how could Collier now approve of Farquhar's treatment of divorce? It did not violently matter. Farquhar was discussing a deeper thing, the question of right and wrong, and he did it not thumpingly, not in the ranting manner, but in a way to make his new play chime in with the thoughts of many a Londoner matrimonially askew.

The point of view of his heroine, in revolt from the bestiality of her life with her husband, while spoken perhaps with a parting sigh at the Restoration, was something quite novel. 'I do love that fellow', said Mrs. Sullen of Archer, 'and

if I met him drest as he should be, and I undrest as I should be, look ye, Sister, I have no supernatural gifts; I can't swear I could resist the temptation, though I can safely promise to avoid it, and that's as much as the best of us can do.' This was perhaps the most striking utterance read by Anne Oldfield, and London had apparently accepted it as it was meant – something like the dawn of the emancipation of women who yearned for honourable escape. Since the family name of Mrs. Sullen was Freeman, in her honesty and humanity she hardly looked over her shoulder at the flippancy and raillery of Congreve's *Millamant*. As one able judge has noted, Farquhar in the *Stratagem* criticised life in a humaner fashion than any dramatist since Haywood.

Such was the demand for Farquhar that between the performances in the third and fourth weeks of the *Stratagem*, on March 27, Owen Swiney introduced, for the first time at the Haymarket, that perennial favourite, the *Jubilee*. Wilks, Benjamin Johnson, Bullock, 'Dicky' Norris, and Mrs. Powel all stepped into their original parts which they had created nearly eight years before, as Sir Harry Wildair, Smuggler, Clincher junior, Dicky the man, and Lady Darling. Mills played Col. Standard instead of Vizard, while Benjamin Husband, whose only character hitherto in Farquhar had been Richmore in *The Twin Rivals*, replaced Mills as Vizard. Amongst other men, the chief new one was Bowen, who was also Foigard in the *Stratagem*; in the present performance of the *Jubilee* he succeeded to the part of Clincher senior. Mrs. Bradshaw, who had proved so winning in the *Stratagem* as Dorinda, easily moved into the role of the somewhat similar Angelica. Above all, Anne Oldfield this night added to her already firm laurels as Lady Lurewell. Needless to say, this notable revival emphasized the popularity of the stricken author. Further, it was a benefit for the well-beloved John Mills, who like Wilks, Bullock, and Jane Rogers had appeared in six of Farquhar's comedies. Four days later, March 31, Bullock likewise enjoyed a benefit, the play being the eighth performance of the *Stratagem*. It was as if every actor pitched upon this most fashionable author for a benefit.

Into the month of April Farquhar lingered, with a narrowing margin between life and death, a miracle as well to

THE LAST FIRST NIGHT

himself as to all who knew him. But the very excitement of the success of the *Stratagem* was to him no doubt a stimulant, an incentive to keep on living. On April 5 the Haymarket presented its ninth performance. With the name of George Farquhar on the lips of every playgoer in London it could have surprised no one that the managers made use of this *réclame* by announcing only nine days later, April 14, still another Farquhar revival, this time of *The Stage-Coach*, the farce out of which the *Stratagem* grew. The revival in the present instance was possibly a hurried benefit for the author, as it may well have been. On the occasion of it, *The Stage-Coach* served as an after-piece to another revival, an opera, *The British Enchanters*, by Lord Lansdowne, first produced a year before. But at this point the succession of plays at the Haymarket possibly provided a unique thrill for the young man whose life was ebbing away under the eaves: for the first time in his career two different plays of his were being given on successive nights: *The Stage-Coach* on Monday, April 14, was followed on the Tuesday by still another showing of its triumphant outgrowth, the *Stratagem*. The theatrical season, in fact, was conspicuously Farquhar's, four of his eight plays having been seen these last two months.

For Tuesday, April 29, Owen Swiney was arranging still another benefit performance of the *Stratagem* for the author. Though Swiney must have known that the last spark of life now alight in George Farquhar was past glowing, he knew equally that the dead-alive man had a family all but destitute, that some relief to them would in its way be a solace to him. It was true. In these waning days of April, Farquhar, who if an indifferent younger husband of an older wife was no unkind father, lay borne down almost as much by anxiety for his little daughters Anne Marguerite and Mary as by the malady that was relentlessly consuming him. What would become of those children? Who would look after them? What could a woman like Margaret Farquhar do to keep them from want, them and her two other children to boot? It was hard for a father to have to die before he was thirty. This was the tormenting thing: that his daughters 'might want a needful support'; it was 'more pain to him than

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

the most violent death that could be inflicted on him'.

He could turn only to his nearest, most intimate, his ablest friend: Robert Wilks. The two men had done so much to develop the career of each other, each after his own bent, his own talents, there in Smock Alley, here in Drury Lane, and now, at the last, on that capital of stages, the new Haymarket. Farquhar took a scrap of paper. Upon it he scrawled a farewell, and a charge, to Wilks, the man who had been at once his benefactor and his beneficiary:

Dear Bob,

I have not anything to leave thee to perpetuate my Memory but two helpless Girls; look upon them sometimes, and think of him that was to the last Moment of his Life,

Thine,

G. Farquhar.

For his wife, Margaret, he had only silence.

Three hours before he died, he is said to have 'flung several fragments' of his papers 'into the fire', remarking that he had 'no remains worth saving'.

But he was to the absolute end a writer. Ironical it was that his final scrape of the pen, as his short breathing grew ever more painful, took that form in which he was least gifted:

Death now appears to seize my latest breath,
But all my miseries will end in death.

Verses, verses, ran through his restless labouring mind as something which he had left uncompleted. It had been beyond his power to revise the last two cantos of that formidable poem, *Barcelona*. Farquhar had nourished a sort of Virgilian conscientiousness about licking its lines into shape.

Whatever else may have perished in the fireplace, *Barcelona* did not find its way there. But posterity would forgive him this work unfinished, forgive him indeed, forgive him in 'all his miseries' the whole incredible epic of his minor Achilles, Lord Peterborough.

The achievement, the consummation that would count with posterity, just as with his present devotees in his recurrent and numerous audiences, was his masterpiece. By a startling but not wholly unexpected coincidence, on this same Tuesday, April 29, even on the day of the eleventh

THE LAST FIRST NIGHT

performance of *The Beaux Stratagem*, his extra benefit over there in the Haymarket, young George Farquhar died, dismally in his garret, high above St. Martin's Lane.

It is related that the audience at the theatre wept for him, the man who both in character and in what he wrote was the most human, the most natural, the gentlest, and the most encompassing in his appeal, of all those who had stamped comedy with the manners of the age.

What were his co-eminent colleagues in the drama doing this day – all of them older men than this young genius cropped in his prime, and all destined to live, doddering, for years after him? Brawny old Wycherley was querulously handing sheaves of bad poems to the dwarfish boy poet, Alexander Pope, to criticize. Will Congreve, whose face at thirty-seven had grown pudgy from soft living, was, whilst he still fondled Anne Bracegirdle, tinkering with a hopeless opera which he had tried to torture out of a story in Ovid. And Captain John Vanbrugh was off somewhere building uncomfortable but remunerative country houses; the stage, the intrigues, the lights of London, had lost their charm for him. Now George Farquhar was dead, and so was English comedy.

On the Saturday, May 3, only a few steps away from the garret, the legacies bells of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields tolled for him. He would lie in congenial company, whom in life he would have gaily greeted: just a score of years before, the same bells had tolled for Nell Gwyn; dying in her thirties, she had managed to live not much longer than himself. Over Nell, a vicar who became an archbishop had preached a sermon. No such adieu attended the end of Farquhar. Yet his burial, eight weeks to a day after his last first night, was by no means that of a pauper: Bob Wilks, on his own responsibility, began his homage to his dead friend by ordering otherwise. He saw to it that the world of the theatre, the world of literature, the world of London itself, knew who it was that was lowered into a befitting tomb within St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

EPILOGUE

At the Haymarket, only three days after the funeral of George Farquhar, there was given a performance which was at once a memorial and a prophecy. It was, for the twelfth time, *The Beaux Stratagem*.

When in this same month of May the appraisal of the dramatist got into print, a rather curious notice, arch, soberly judicial, no little condescending, but allowing the devil a bit of his due, appeared in *The Muses' Mercury*. It read:

'All that love comedy will be sorry to hear of the death of Mr. Farquhar, whose two last plays had something in them that was truly humorous and diverting. 'Tis true the critics will not allow any part of them to be regular (a "regular" play in these days was one which strictly observed the unity of time by limiting the action to twenty-four hours); but Mr. Farquhar had a genius for comedy, of which one may say that it was rather above rules than below them. His conduct, though not artful, was surprising; his characters, though not great, were just; his humour, though low, diverting; his dialogue, though loose and incorrect, gay and agreeable; and his wit, though not superabundant, pleasant. In a word, his plays have in the *toute ensemble*, as the painters phrase it, a certain novelty and mirth, which pleased the audience every time they were represented; and such as love to laugh at the theatre will probably miss him more than they now imagine.'

The editor of the *Mercury*, if not the writer of this piece as well, was John Oldmixon, who himself had failed as a dramatist. He could not quite forget that seven years before, when Farquhar had favoured him with an epilogue for his play *The Grove*, a play so bad that its audience jeered, Farquhar, in the opinion of its perpetrator, had contributed to the failure. Oldmixon had sought scurrilous revenge by abusing the *Jubilee*; even now he excluded that constantly revived play as not worth mention.

EPILOGUE

It must be added, however, that the *Mercury* at the end of September remarked of the coming theatrical season, 'As for comedies, there's no great expectation of anything of that kind since Mr. Farquhar's death'. As the worthy editor may have noted, the Haymarket was in fact continuing to salute the memory of Farquhar by booking the thirteenth performance of the *Stratagem* for October 10, and repeating it in November and December.

Yet a more generous and inclusive review of Farquhar in the press would probably have done little to alleviate the lot of his family. The children Anne Marguerite and Mary could not now have been more than three and two years old. Prospects for them were bleak. From the theatre, Mrs. Farquhar drew the proceeds of the last benefit, not enough for her own living and for the doctor's bills. She was then at a loss whither to turn. Since Wilks had paid for the funeral, she could hardly call upon him, at least not at once. Where were Farquhar's other friends? Where was that stage-foundling of his, Anne Oldfield? Where were his own kin? Neither his sister in Chelsea nor his brother Peyton in Dublin seemed in the least concerned about their infant nieces.

At length certain literary acquaintance suggested to Mrs. Farquhar that she publish *Barcelona*. She rummaged amongst her husband's sparse possessions, eventually found the manuscript, and gave it to a printer as found, adding only a brief preface, together with a dedication for what it might be worth, to its hero, the Earl of Peterborough. Then the widow desperately sent a copy of *Barcelona* to Queen Anne. The response of the Queen, in due course, was a gift of ten guineas, conveyed to Mrs. Farquhar by the Duchess of Devonshire.

Within a short time thereafter, in February, 1708, the hapless mother had to follow up her original communication to her sovereign with a 'petition' and 'certificates', which constituted a plea for maintenance. The Duke of Ormonde, perhaps conscious-stricken, extended belated help by writing the first certificate, and the papers altogether went forward to the Queen by the hand of his Duchess. In the petition, Margaret Farquhar recited the exploit of her first husband,

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Benjamin Pemell, against the pirates, his untimely death before a pension was granted him, the misfortune and death of the dramatist's father, bits of George Farquhar's record in the Army early and late, and the death of the Pemells' eldest son. The certificate from Ormonde testified to Farquhar's good character in the Army, while a second certificate from Orrery elaborated upon the usefulness of the Lieutenant in his regiment. A third certificate, from the Duke of Bolton, confirmed the capture of the privateer by Benjamin Pemell, Bolton having been one of the Lords Justices of Ireland from 1697 to 1700.

At about the same time, Margaret Farquhar diligently applied to Robert Harley, from whom as Secretary of State she believed she had some reason to hope for attention. 'I most humbly beg,' Mrs. Farquhar wrote Harley, 'your Honour's powerful intercession to the Queen for her gracious charity to a distressed widow and fatherless children, who without some immediate redress must inevitably perish; the late experience of your Honour's great and generous nature encourages me to beg your assistance to the Queen for my future subsistence. I never yet received a farthing from Her Majesty except ten guineas by the hands of the Duchess of Devonshire upon the presentation of my husband's poem. I hope your Honour has perused my petition and certificates to the Queen.'

Unfortunately neither Harley nor the Queen bestirred themselves. It was Robert Wilks who first came to the rescue. He had found, amongst the papers of Farquhar, that farewell note: 'Dear Bob'. On May 25, 1708, he put on at Drury Lane, 'for the author's widow and children', a benefit performance of *A Trip to the Jubilee*, in which not Anne Oldfield, but Mrs. Knight, played Lady Lurewell, with Mrs. Bradshaw once more as Angelica, and Mrs. Moor in her old character of the original Parly.

When the moment came for the theatre to hand over the proceeds to the beneficiaries, it seems that the management unjustly withheld a considerable part, and since Margaret Farquhar apparently still owed her husband's physician, Dr. Shadwell, a large bill which he was trying to collect, the widow besought Vice-Chamberlain Coke to deal with the

EPILOGUE

theatre in the matter. 'Sir,' she pleaded with Coke, 'The exaction of the playhouse makes me very uneasy, but hope through your authority and goodness it may be greatly qualified. I have made a thorough search into the rates, and am well assured that poor Mr. Farquhar allowed £35 for the charges of the house, though he was promised by Mr. Swiney who was then manager of the new playhouse that he should have it free. Mr. Wilks did then justify the same to Dr. Shadwell, who acquainted my Lord Chancellor therewith, who ordered him (Farquhar) another benefit day; but through mismanagement it proved of no advantage to him. The players I understand usually allowed £40 for their benefit play. But still I hope through your powerful mediation it may be reduced to a much less sum, for the chief actors I presume may be easily persuaded to quit their own charges upon Mr. Farquhar's account, who has been so serviceable to them. I hope, Sir, to have the honour of seeing you a Sunday.'

Whatever the result of this appeal, the sum at length received from Drury Lane evidently did not to any marked degree relieve the poverty of the Farquhars, as may well have been the case if Dr. Shadwell had to be paid a large share of the funds. The struggle of Margaret Farquhar to live was incessant, and disheartening. To deepen her sorrows, the recent loss of her eldest son by Pemell, the son in the Navy, who had advanced from letterman to midshipman and was about to win a commission when he died, was the more severe inasmuch as he might have contributed to the keep of his mother's household.

Mrs. Farquhar had no further recourse other than to renew her petition to the Queen, by way of urgent reminder. Shortly after the Duchess of Ormonde had presented the first petition, the widow gathered from Lady Burlington, then in waiting, that the Queen promised to allow the royal bounty to Farquhar's survivors. This commitment Margaret Farquhar, in her second supplication, now brought to the notice of her sovereign, repeating the original statements, somewhat condensed, and thus ending: 'Wherefore your petitioner humbly begs leave to remind Your Majesty of your gracious promise . . . to allow the royal bounty to a

disconsolate widow and four fatherless children, who has lost two husbands and a son in the service of the crown, who are now reduced from a once very plentiful fortune to an extreme desperate one, therefore begs Your Majesty's speedy relief for Christ Jesus sake to grant.' Hereto she attached fresh copies of the three certificates.

Whilst spiders measured these documents for the usual cobwebs, there occurred in this ensuing year of 1709 the event which would have given most satisfaction to George Farquhar had he lived: the publication of his *Works* in a single volume (the thing Dublin had declined to do) by Bernard Lintot. It was a rather decorative production in octavo. *The Works of the late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar*, read the title-page, 'illustrated with cuts representing three of the principal scenes in each play'. Lintot's further claim of inclusiveness, 'containing all his letters, poems, essays and comedies published in his lifetime' was a bit sweeping. *The Stage-Coach* was missing; for the rest, Lintot had simply reprinted *Love and Business*, together with its dedication to Edmond Chaloner, and its preface. But for the whole book Lintot with admirable assurance wrote a dedication of his own, inscribing it to one John Eyre (probably kin to the contemporary family of judges of that name, Sir Samuel and Sir Robert, father and son). Lintot was not a felicitous writer; but in the course of his dedication in which he protested that his sole aim was to preserve Farquhar for posterity, he compared the dramatist to Ben Jonson and Shadwell in point of skill in depicting the 'humours of the age', and to Van Dyck and Lely as an expert in 'personages and habits'.

Not the least important feature, however, was the illustrations. For these, Lintot employed a minor artist, Eloas Knight, a man who either painted portraits of the eminent living or copied portraits of the eminent dead. He was known on the one hand for his portrait of Dr. Daniel Whitby, Bishop of Salisbury, still living, and on the other for his copy of Sampson's portrait of Sir Thomas White, founder of St. John's College, Oxford, deceased for a hundred and fifty years. (Sampson himself had painted this picture thirty years after White's death.) It further appears, from the

EPILOGUE

illustrations to *Farquhar's Works*, that Knight was well acquainted with the theatre, possibly as a scene designer. Every one of his Farquhar scenes, as drawn, revealed accurate knowledge of contemporary stage settings; moreover, Knight filled his scenes with dramatic action. He was obliged within small compass to be both emphatic and comprehensive, yet to project important character. In these requirements the artist did not too badly. Thus for the *Jubilee* he drew general discomfiture on the part of all the actors except Wildair, who stood serene in the foreground. In *The Twin Rivals* he managed to exhibit nine of its thirteen characters in scenes of rough-and-tumble. In the *Stratagem* the reader saw Aimwell in his chair attended by Lady Bountiful and Dorinda, but with Archer, the Sullens, and their servants all brawling upstage. To fit the page of the book Knight seems to have narrowed his stage considerably; if this made his illustrations rather crowded, he overcame a good share of the narrowness by a deep perspective, well drawn, and by remaining faithful to details of setting and properties.

Yet to the biographer the most helpful picture in the book is its frontispiece: Ben Jonson presenting George Farquhar to the Nine Muses. Though, unlike the case with the illustrations to the plays, the name 'E. Knight' did not appear under this picture, the drawing was so close to his manner that the identity of the artist could hardly be doubted. The great value of the sketch is that it contains the only believable likeness of Farquhar extant. The painter, working only a year or two after Farquhar's death, must have seen Farquhar frequently in the theatre, and known him, for every line of the dramatist's figure, affirming his youth, his costume, his thin pale face, his 'tender constitution', fits all that is recorded of his physical description.

The artist drew Apollo with his lyre, seated on a dais, encircled by the Muses compliantly receptive. It was not the bearded Ben Jonson who was introducing the newcomer, but a smooth-faced young Ben, no older than Farquhar himself, and a Ben holding the scroll of one of his plays that Farquhar most admired, *Bartholomew Fair*. Jonson bore a seasoned look, quite at ease before a god, while Farquhar,

though crowned with laurel like his sponsor, and holding an Irish harp opposite Apollo's lyre, stood shy and abashed. Overhead was written the motto of Drury Lane (*Vivitur Ingenio*). Below the picture ran a verse from Horace's *Ars Poetica*: 'So great the charm that can crown the most ordinary words' (*tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris*). It would have been difficult to find a line that more aptly summed up the contribution of George Farquhar to English drama: the naturalness with which he informed his dialogue, which was the language of the middle classes.

Whether Bernard Lintot assisted the widow and children of Farquhar out of the profits from this book is not known; but at least the expanded fame of the author seemed to justify a new edition of *Barcelona*, which in 1710 was 'published for the benefit of the author's widow and children'. Again, the *Works* itself sold well enough to bring forth a second edition two years later, in 1711. Someone did enable the Farquhars to live, and it was neither the Government nor the theatre managers. The appeal to the Queen lay unheeded. As for the plays, although all three of the more popular ones, the *Jubilee*, *The Recruiting Officer*, and the *Stratagem*, continued in the regular repertory at both the Haymarket and Drury Lane, the dramatist's family got nothing, apart from occasional personal help, no doubt, from Robert Wilks. He alone, of all the Farquhar actors, remained sensible that his own fame, present as well as past, was rooted in the work of that author.

Then came aid from quite a different quarter. In the sorry list of patrons of Farquhar's published work, one man, and one only, at last took some notice of his survivors. Was it possibly because the name of this patron appeared so prominently in the first pages of the collected editions of Farquhar? It was Edmund Chaloner, the traveller, the conversationalist, the man with the famous grandfather, the man to whom Farquhar, eleven years before, had inscribed *Love and Business*. Chaloner at length proved somewhat more than a mere friend on paper. In April, 1713, he renewed that dusty petition to Robert Harley in respect of a pension. Coming from a man of Chaloner's standing, an appeal evidently carried more weight than it did from a widow direct.

EPILOGUE

Chaloner pressed the claims of Margaret Farquhar, and emphasized her poverty. Within the period of two years ensuing – long enough indeed for an underfed mother with four children in like case – the pension was granted, either by Harley (who went out of office in August, 1714) or by his immediate successor. This same year was further signalized by the appearance of a third edition of *Farquhar's Works*. Lintot, at least, was doing fairly well.

But the petitioning of Mrs. Farquhar did not there end. In the *London Gazette* for November 29–December 3, 1715, although the authorities had long granted the pension, she was cited to appear before the Lords Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, to have her claims examined. The consequence of this interview, however strong the case which the widow may have submitted, was not substantial enough to sustain for very long a woman worn down by incessant cares, anxiety and frustration. The meeting in Chelsea is the last thing that is known of Margaret Farquhar. She apparently died early in 1716, at the age of about forty-nine, 'in circumstances of the utmost indigence'.

Again Robert Wilks stepped into the breach. The daughters, Anne Marguerite and Mary, were at this time not more than twelve and eleven years old. They had gained but little education above stark illiteracy; yet a thought had to be given to their supporting themselves, eventually. Wilks decided to apprentice the children to a mantua-maker. In order to get funds wherewith to finance this apprenticeship, he designed giving each of the girls a benefit performance. By this time Wilks was prominent as well in management as in acting, and he induced his brother-managers in the theatre, Colley Cibber and Barton Booth, to fall in with his wishes. On May 29, 1716, he presented *The Recruiting Officer*, which he billed 'for the benefit of the orphan children of the late Mr. Farquhar'. It is significant that there was no mention of the widow.

At this distance of years it may seem hard that Wilks carried out the request of his dying friend to 'look upon' the 'two helpless girls' only to the extent of putting them to work at such a tender age. It is true that Wilks was prosperous, that he was now earning £1,000 every season. But the

demands upon his income were enormous, and he had neither the time nor the money to assume indefinitely the major support of anyone outside his own family. Not only was he pestered by a horde of ravenous relations in Ireland, but in the year just past, 1715, he had himself married, for his second wife, a widow with four children.

This marriage, and his first marriage as well, throws light upon the reason that a vocation of cutting and sewing for Anne Marguerite and Mary Farquhar occurred to Wilks. It was the trade he knew most about. His new wife, a needlewoman of Westminster, had made him half a dozen Holland shirts so expertly that he fell in love with her, while his first wife, daughter of the town clerk of Southampton, had actually been a mantua-maker.

In itself, working over mantuas need not altogether have prejudiced the future of Farquhar's orphans, if they should become clever at it, and if they received some help apart from it. Nevertheless it is likely that their father, had he lived, would have found some way to avoid their being put to such labour at the ages of twelve and eleven, would have seen to it that they got decent schooling. There was irony enough in this lot of the children. Had not Farquhar, in his own ill-starred play, *The Twin Rivals*, forecast the fate of his daughters yet unborn? Thus Ben Wou'dbee to Mrs. Mandrake, as they discussed the amours of Moabite the Jew: 'And what is become of the daughters, pray?' 'Why,' replied Mandrake, 'one of 'em is a mantua-maker. . . .' It was a trade to which foundlings, among others, were sent.

Meantime Edmond Chaloner had become guardian of the Farquhar children, a responsibility he seems to have assumed upon the death of their mother. Chaloner on behalf of Anne Marguerite and Mary drew a pension of £20, the pension which his influence had originally secured for Mrs. Farquhar.

If to this pension the children could have added something from the publishers of the mockingly recurrent editions of their father's plays they would have fared not too badly. But they enjoyed none of those profits. Not only the *Works*, of which a fourth edition appeared in 1718, continued to be republished, but single plays kept coming out as well. In this same year, indeed, Edmund Curll produced a version

EPILOGUE

of *The Stage-Coach*, prefixed by a few pages of what he called 'The Life and Character of Mr. George Farquhar'. Neither character nor life emerged from the few bits of gossip which Curll printed. But the man did record one interesting thing. 'I am informed by my friend,' he said, 'that Mr. Farquhar wrote a tragedy, which was once in his (the friend's) possession. He says it was rather a rough draft than a complete work, consisting of many scenes, all prose, and others not perfectly finished. He remembers that the subject was very agreeable to Mr. Farquhar's temper, Love and War; and that the love parts were well worked, pathetic and tender. It is uncertain what is become of this performance; but my friend says it was left with him by the son of the late Mr. Farquhar, and was design'd to be offered to the players; but how it miscarried he cannot inform the world.'

Bad as the reputation of Curll is, this account bears a little too much credible detail to be altogether dismissed. The 'son' of Farquhar was apparently his stepson, Margaret Pemell's second son, the widow having spoken in 1708 of the young midshipman who died as her 'eldest son'. The second son, at the time of the death of Farquhar, would have been perhaps seventeen years old. His mother believably could have entrusted him, in her need, with a manuscript to deliver to the friend mentioned by Curll, in the hope that this friend would get the play put on, and so return at least the copy-money for it. But the man to all appearance lost the play, and Curll kept him unnamed. It is, however, not difficult to imagine young Pemell presenting himself to this friend as 'Mrs. Farquhar's son'.

In the year following this curious publication, again unhappily for the daughters of Farquhar their guardian Edmond Chaloner died. The forlorn children were at this time, 1719, still only about fifteen and fourteen years old. Once more Robert Wilks, the faithful, came forward. The result of the action he took was that the Crown, in September 1719, ordered that the pension 'for Farquhar's children . . . and all arrears thereof', be made payable 'unto Robert Wilks, of King Street, Covent Garden, for the use of the said children'.

No later than 1721 the fifth edition of Farquhar's *Works* was put into print, this time in duodecimo. But it was the

sixth, in 1728, of the same size, that contained the first real biography of Farquhar, 'Memoirs of the Author Never Before Published', together with the first word recorded of the daughters for nine years. The biographer was W. R. Chetwood (as he later divulged), prompter at Drury Lane, and his material he had got from Robert Wilks, direct. Little of what Chetwood set down has been disproved. In point of time he was nearly as close to Farquhar as Eloas Knight had been. Sometime before 1715 James Quin, the comedian, had persuaded Chetwood to quit Smock Alley for Drury Lane, just as Chetwood had previously induced Quin himself, who began in Dublin, to go to London. (This procedure was the story of Farquhar and Wilks all over again.) Chetwood must in his new surroundings have grown rapidly popular with the actors, because they gave him, as prompter, a benefit performance for three years running (1715-17). At all events Chetwood was able to make use of his intimacy with Robert Wilks to the extent that the prompter got the story of Farquhar in 'Mr. Wilks's own words'. Wilks furthermore 'vetted' the material before its publication.

It is questionable merely whether Farquhar 'entirely forgave' Margaret Pemell for misrepresenting the state of her assets. But Wilks was allowing no detraction, even after so long a lapse of years. In respect of Anne Marguerite and Mary, Chetwood was bound to give Wilks a clean slate, perhaps a bit too unblemished: 'his (Farquhar's) wife being long since dead, his good friend Mr. Wilks has been highly instrumental in setting his children above want'. This can mean nothing more than that the daughters, who in 1728 were young women of twenty-four and twenty-three, were then known to be, if nothing better than artisans, at least not in a state of acute privation. Yet Wilks never wholly neglected them, and they looked upon him as a father.

In 1732 the blow fell. Robert Wilks, at the age of sixty-seven, came to the end of his days. He was buried in old St. Paul's, Covent Garden, in the goodly company of Joe Haines and the great Wycherley. And the daughters of his most dear friend, the mantua-makers, unmarried, unnoticed, were left completely on their own. At their age, meagrely educated though they must have been, if they were able to

EPILOGUE

make things for others, they should have been able to make something for themselves, even of themselves. But they sank into the meanest obscurity.

This was the more deplorable, inasmuch as by the 1730's every one of their increasingly famous father's plays had been revived, and had been putting an income into many another pocket, but nothing into theirs. The three best comedies, whose permanence Farquhar saw established in his own lifetime, were fixtures; and Barton Booth, for his part, prospered as well in *The Stage-Coach*. Indeed in April, 1730, so enormous had been the success of John Gay two years before with *The Beggar's Opera* that Smock Alley experimented with Farquhar in the same kind, and turned *The Stage-Coach* into a ballad-opera. It went off sufficiently well for the theatre in Goodman's Fields to bring it into London in February, 1731, an opera in two acts, with duets by Fetch and Dolly, Isabella and Basil, Nicodemus and Isabella, Micher and Nicodemus, and not least, a solo by the Irishman, Macahone. The occasion marked a new high point in the posthumous fame of George Farquhar.

But even *Sir Harry Wildair* came on for four performances, in February, 1737, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and all of the rest of the comedies had restarted long before. As early as 1712 Drury Lane put on *Love and a Bottle* again, with John Mills as Roebuck. By the end of the year 1716, when Farquhar was nearly ten years dead, no less than six of his eight plays had been acted between that January and December alone, including the two which had seemed to be failures, *The Inconstant* and *The Twin Rivals*, both of which found revival in late autumn at Lincoln's Inn Fields. In *The Twin Rivals* Benjamin Husband as Trueman and Jane Rogers as Constance reappeared from the original cast. This play in particular enjoyed henceforth repeated runs, for a week at a time. But did anyone in its audiences, upon hearing that scene between Ben Wou'dbee and Mrs. Mandrake, take thought of the shadow into which the daughters of the radiant Farquhar had fallen?

Mary Farquhar was living as late as ten years after the death of Wilks, but had by that time (1742) let herself be married to a 'low tradesman'. She had not been long a wife

when she died, barely older than her father was at the last, and possibly from the same malady.

Anne Marguerite lived on, a spinster, mercifully drawing both her own and her sister's portion of the little pension of £20. It was not enough; she suffered sharp want. In December, 1750, David Garrick (who as a boy had played Kite in *The Recruiting Officer* in the palace at Lichfield), hearing of her sad straits, gave her a benefit performance of *The Beaux Stratagem*. In this play Garrick usually chose to impersonate Scrub, the part rejected by Cibber; but now, to distinguish the occasion, Garrick assumed Wilks's role of Archer, a character he enacted equally well. On a benefit night, the beneficiary was allotted a large block of the tickets personally, to sell, and disposed of them at whatever prices they might fetch. The management helped such vending by means of the advertisement, which for this benefit read: 'Tickets delivered by a daughter of Farquhar in great distress will be taken this night'.

Such temporary alleviation was well enough for the time being. But Anne Marguerite Farquhar, though of a sounder constitution than her unhappy sister, appears to have possessed no mental resources, nor any very remunerative skill that should have arisen from the craft she had learnt. She dwindled into a maidservant. Last heard of when she was about sixty, in 1764, she was living 'in mean and indigent circumstances, without any knowledge of refinement either in sentiments or expenses; she seemed to take no pride in her father's fame, and was in every respect fitted to her humble situation'.

It was not until 1773, nine years after this date, that Oliver Goldsmith, inspired by his compatriot George Farquhar, turned Aimwell and Archer into Marlow and Hastings and achieved *She Stoops to Conquer*. This new play had its first night in Covent Garden on March 15, exactly one week after the sixty-seventh anniversary of the first night of *The Beaux Stratagem*. During that long and dreary interval, two full generations, and throughout the lifetime of both of Farquhar's pitiable daughters, the state of English comedy had remained almost as dark, and its development almost as barren, as the sunless careers of Anne Marguerite and Mary.

NOTES

- PP. Portland Papers, in custody of HMC. Two petitions by Margaret Farquhar to Queen Anne; and three certificates, by the Duke of Ormonde, the Earl of Orrery, and the Duke of Bolton. 1708. (Discovered in 1937 by Prof. J. R. Sutherland.)
- WP. Preface by Thomas Wilkes to *Farquhar's Works*, Dublin, 1775.
- CM. Memoir of Farquhar as told by Robert Wilks to W. R. Chetwood, prefixed to the sixth ed. of *Farquhar's Works*, London, 1728. (This is the first biography of Farquhar, other than a few pages of small value called *The Life and Character of Mr. George Farquhar*, which appeared in 1718, by an unknown author, in an ed. of *The Stage-Coach* printed for E. Curll.)
- G. John Genest, *Account of the English Stage*, Vol. II, Bath, 1832.

CHAPTER I

The Rev. George Farquhar: J. B. Leslie, *Clogher Clergy and Parishes*, 1633-4, Clones, Cleenish.

Though the original will was destroyed in the burning of the Dublin Four Courts in 1922, Sir Bernard Burke, in a collection of pedigrees which he compiled, had preserved the record of the Farquhars here given. (Information kindly furnished by Dr. D. A. Chart, Public Record Office, Belfast.)

Fearchar: *Notes & Queries*, XV, 179, 466.

The Farquhars: J. Paterson, *Hist. of the County of Ayr*, II, 425, 431.

John Farquhar: H. Cotton, *Fasti Hibernicae*, 1849, III, 369.

His kinship to the dramatist: D. J. O'Donoghue, *Poets of Ireland*, 'George Farquhar'.

George Walker: *Harleian MSS.*, 6584, f. 292b, printed by H. C. Foxcroft. Supplement to Burnet's *Hist. of His Own Times*, 1902, 321. (Ordinary biographical references from DNB, as with the case of all men and women below whom DNB includes.)

Kinship of Farquhar's mother to Wiseman: *WP*, iii.

Capel Wiseman: *Alumni Cantabrigienses*; H. Cotton, *op.cit.*, III, 282, 362, 369; Wm. Reeves, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore*, *passim*.

Birth and parentage of Farquhar: Register of Trinity College, Dublin.

Peyton Farquhar: Records of the Dublin Guild of Cutlers, Painterstainers, and Stationers. (Information kindly supplied by Mr. Francis O'Kelley, of Dublin.)

The daughter: *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*, ed. Abel Boyer, 1701, Letters XXXVI and XXXII.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Another possible son: Report, dated 1693, on the state of the Diocese of Armagh, Parish of Lissan, headed 'Incumbents' Names'. This report, quoted by Dr. Chart, PRO, Belfast, is in the Library at Armagh.

Ellis Walker: *Alumni Dublinenses; Register of the Free Grammar School of Londonderry, 1617-1814* (pamphlet), p. 2.

Derry School: Sir Thos. Phillips, *Londonderry and London Companies* (North of Ireland Record Office Publications), *passim*. Further history of the school and of the duration of its course kindly furnished by Mr. W. S. Ferguson, Foyle College, Londonderry.

Grammar school curricula: F. Walker, *English Grammar Schools to 1660*; C. Hoole, *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole, 1660*, ed. E. T. Campagnac, 1913.

Farquhar on Aesop: *A Discourse upon Comedy, in Love and Business*.

Farquhar's first verses: *CM*, iii.

Derry besieged: J. Betts, *The Story of the Irish Society*, 86; G. Walker, *The Siege of Londonderry, 1689*, *passim*.

Closing of Derry School: T. Ask's *Diary of the Siege and Hist. of Derry*, for May 27, 1689.

Burning of the house of William Farquhar, and his death: *PP*, petitions of Margaret Farquhar.

Peyton Farquhar in Dublin: Records of the Dublin Guild, *vid. sup.*

George's 'tender constitution': D. O'Bryan, *Memoirs of Wilks, 1732*, p. 13.

Carrying the colours: *The Life and Character of Mr. George Farquhar*, prefixed to *The Stage-Coach*, ed. 1718, printed for E. Curll.

Farquhar at the Boyne, under Hamilton: *PP*, petitions of Margaret Farquhar.

Battle of the Boyne: T. Witherow, *The Boyne and Agbrim*, 101 ff.

Robert Bonner: *Alumni Dublinenses*. Bonner and Dennison: *Diocesan Visitation, Londonderry, 1691; Derry School Register, vid. sup.*, 2.

Derry School reopened: Sir Thos. Phillips, *op. cit.* Further information kindly sent by Mr. W. S. Ferguson, *vid. sup.*

Return of Ellis Walker: *Derry School Register, vid. sup.*, 2.

The teaching of an usher: C. Hoole, *op. cit.*, 214.

Character of Ellis Walker: inscription in St. Peter's Church, Drogheda. (Kindness of Mr. W. S. Ferguson.)

Farquhar's personality: *CM*, iv; *Works*, Edinburgh ed., 1768, vi; W. R. Chetwood, *Hist. of the Stage, 1749*, 148-52; D. O'Bryan, *op. cit.*, 13; Farquhar's own 'Picture' of himself, in *Love and Business, 1702*; portrait of Farquhar, frontispiece to *Works*, first ed., 1709.

Old Derry: J. Betts, *op. cit.*; *vid.* water-colour drawing, facing p. 70.

Other pupils at Derry: *Register, vid. sup.*, p. 2.

Studies in the upper forms of a grammar school: C. Hoole, *op. cit.*, 207 ff.

Ode on Schomberg: *Love and Business*.

John Farquhar of Lissan: Report on the Diocese of Armagh, *vid. sup.* See also *View of the Archbishopric of Armagh, 1703*, under Tamnehagen.

John Morrice: *Register, vid. sup.*, p. 2.

Wiseman's encouragement of Farquhar to read for holy orders: *WP*, iv
Date of Farquhar's matriculation: *Trin. Coll. Register*.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

St. George Ashe, and the College in the 1690's: Stubbs, *Hist. of the Univ. of Dublin*, 146 ff.

Owen Lloyd: *Alumni Dubl.*, 506; T. Colby, Ordnance Survey of the County of Londonderry, 1837, 91.

Richard Tighe: *Alumni Dubl.*; Farquhar's dedication to him of *The Inconstant*, 1702.

Vv. on the riding-house, and on Queen Mary: *Love and Business*.

The exhibition of £4: *Private Register*, *Trin. Coll.*

Borrowing a book and lending bellows: Chetwood, *Hist. of the Stage*, 151.

Farquhar as an undergraduate: A. C. Ewald, *Farquhar's Works*, introd., 1892.

The man born to be hanged: D. E. Baker, *Biographia Dramatica*, I, 225.

Farquhar at Donnybrook Fair: *Private Register*, *Trin. Coll.* (discovered by Dr. Alton, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and published by Dr. Peter Kavanagh, *TLS*, February 10, 1945).

Scenes at Donnybrook Fair: B. H. Blacker, *Brief Sketches of the Parishes of Booterstown and Donnybrook*, 144.

Song of Donnybrook: *The Humours of Donnybrook Fair, or The Sprig of Shillelah*, printed for R. Grace, Dublin. (BM.)

Dr. George Browne: Stubbs, *op. cit.*, 145.

Farquhar and the shipping merchant: Letter to Sam Briscoe, from Leyden, October 15, 1700, in *Love and Business*.

CHAPTER III

Smock Alley, and Archbishop King: L. I. Guiney, *A Little English Gallery*, 120. (The theatre stood upon the site later occupied by the Catholic church of St. Michael and St. John. See D. F. McCarthy, *Poets and Dramatists of Ireland*, 201.)

Robert Wilks in Dublin: J. Doran, *Annals of the English Stage*, I, 429; C. Cibber, *Apology*, 123; *Memoirs*, printed for R. Curll, 1733, 24; D. O'Bryan, *op. cit.*, 13; G., 145.

Joseph Ashbury: R. Hitchcock, *Hist. View of the Irish Stage*, I, 23-35; his kinship with Richards: Chetwood, *Hist. of the Stage*, 20.

Wilks's early appearances in London: J. Galt, *Lives of the Players*, I, 131; G., 145; C. Cibber, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

Irish managers in London: L. Stockwell, *Dublin Theatres and Customs*, 1938, 312.

Farquhar a 'corrector of the press': *WP*, iv.

His first meeting with Wilks and Ashbury: *WP*, iv.

'In defiance to legs of mutton': Beau Banter, in *Sir Harry Wildair*, Act II, Sc. 1.

Farquhar as Othello: *WP*, iv.

'All you that were bred at the university': *Love and a Bottle*, Act II, Sc. 2, and Act III, Sc. 2.

Members of Ashbury's company: R. Hitchcock, *op. cit.*, I, 25; J. Doran, *op. cit.*, I, 491.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Parts played by Farquhar in Dublin: *WP*, iv. Wilkes says the information came from Benj. Husband, fellow-actor at Smock Alley with Farquhar. Husband later created Richmore in Farquhar's *The Twin Rivals*.

Farquhar as Guyomar: *CM*, iv. Price as the actor opposite, *WP*, v. Date of the accident: Hitchcock, *op. cit.*, I, 31.

Wilks's advice to Farquhar, and the gift of 10 gns.: *WP*, v.

Irishmen in London: S. Gwynn, *Hist. of Ireland*, 365.

West Chester: D. O'Bryan, *op. cit.*, 13. Miss B. Tunstall, of Chester, kindly sent me the following note: 'West Chester was just another name for Chester. It is used in documents between 1490 and 1700 . . . to distinguish it from Chester-le-Street and other Chesters.' This port was the usual one for ships from Ireland.

CHAPTER IV

Farquhar's sister in Chelsea: Letter XVII, from *Celadon* (Farquhar) to *Astraea* (Susanna Carroll), in *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*, ed. by Abel Boyer, 'Cardinal Bentivoglio', 1701.

Farquhar in Fleece Tavern: recollected in a letter to Briscoe, October 15, 1700, in *Love and Business*.

The actual streets and byways, houses and coffee-houses, parks and fields of Farquhar's own London are readily traceable from the many references to them which he makes in his plays and letters. Further details: Ashton, *Social Life*, II, 152-65; Misson, *Travels*, 24-7; de Brazey, *Le Guide d'Angleterre*, chapter on a day in London.

University man, actor, dramatist: Ben Jonson and Thomas Heywood, though both acted and both wrote plays, had not for certain been undergraduates at either university.

The company at Will's: enumerated in *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*. See also *Burnaby's Plays*, ed. F. E. Budd, 1931, p. 43.

John Hopkins: E. Gosse, *op. cit.*, 113.

Will's coffee-house: Willard Connely, *Brawny Wycherley*, 227-32, and *passim*.

Farquhar on the old soldier: *Love and a Bottle*, Act I, Sc. 1.

Collier's *Short View*: for a good summary and exposition, see D. C. Taylor, *William Congreve*, 1931, 106-44.

Farquhar at the play: from *Adventures of Covent Garden*.

Drury Lane in 1698: Robins, *Anne Oldfield*, 38 ff.

In the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, there is a rare playbill, 12 by 16 inches, of the kind Farquhar saw during his first year in London. It reads: 'W. R. At the New Theatre in Little Lincoln's Inn Fields. This present Wednesday the 27th of October (1697) will be presented a Comedy called "The Committee, or The Faithful Irishman", by Sir Robert Howard. No person to stand on the stage. Nor any money to be after returned (*sic*) the curtain is drawn up. By H. M. Servants. *Vivat Rex*.' (Farquhar himself had of course acted the part of Careless in this play in Dublin, *vid.* p. 46.)

A forthcoming play was spoken of as 'upon the posts'. Small bills also were either delivered at patrons' houses or thrown into carriages. *Vid. Trans. Bibliog. Soc., The Library*, XI, 499-502.

NOTES

CHAPTER V

Farquhar's hack-work: L. A. Strauss, introd. to Farquhar (*Beaux Stratagem, Recruiting Officer, Discourse upon Comedy*), 1914.

The line from the Aeneid, II, 6, leaves no doubt that Farquhar was in the main describing his own escapades.

Farquhar's chief characters copies of himself: Tom Brown, *Memoirs*, 1704, 1-2; Sir James Ware, *Works*, ed. Walter Harris, 1746, III, 263; Giles Jacob, *Poetical Register*, 1723, I, 98; E. Curll, *Life and Character of Mr. George Farquhar*, prefixed to *The Stage-Coach*, 1718, ii.

Joe Haynes (from the back of an ass): A. Thaler, *Shakespeare to Sheridan*, 1922, 283.

Pinkethman and Bullock: Steele, *Tatler*, 188.

Roebuck and Leathe: L. I. Guiney, *op. cit.*, 120.

Love and a Bottle delayed by *The Relapse* and the *Short View*: W. Archer, ed. Farquhar, *Mermaid Series*, 1906, p. 5.

CHAPTER VI

Only 'five plays indured six days' acting': *A Comparison Between the Two Stages*, 1702, ed. S. B. Wells, 1942, preface, p. 2.

Farquhar's expectations of his play: *CM*, v.

Cibber on the receipts at a performance: J. Doran, *op. cit.*, I, 435. At LIF, December 18, 1714, *Recruiting Officer* played to £143; December 11, 1716, *Twin Rivals* played (a benefit) to £162 7s. od. (Haslewood's MS. notes to Whincop, *Scanderbeg*, 1747, 230, BM.) Mr. Cyril Davis, in a paper based on a study of the records of LIF, and read before the Elizabethan Society, October 21, 1946, gave further figures.

Farquhar and the need for lewdness: Tom Brown, *op. cit.*, 1-2.

'Whole life long the first night of a new play': *The Inconstant* (Mirabel), Act V, Sc. 1.

Catherine Trotter: E. Gosse, *Royal Soc. of Lit.*, Vol. XXXIV, 13; Mrs. Cockburn, *Works*, introd., with portrait, including Farquhar's letter to her, and her letter to Patrick Cockburn, her future husband, on libertinism. Farquhar's verses on her: *Love and Business*.

Farquhar meets Anne Oldfield: *Memoirs of Mrs. Anne Oldfield*, 1741, 55; T. Cibber, *Lives of the Poets*, 1754, III, 127; *Biographia Britannica*, article on Anne Oldfield, 1760; *WP*, vi; J. Galt, *op. cit.*, 89; L. Whistler, *Vanbrugh*, 93.

Return of Robert Wilks: G., 145; C. Cibber, *Apology*, 123. Farquhar's verses on Wilks's return: *Love and Business*.

Wildair really Farquhar: Giles Jacob, *op. cit.*, I, 98.

The love letter: addressed to 'Celia', which may be Farquhar's name for Catherine (Trotter). The tone of the letter does reflect his fruitless pursuit of that lady. From the next four letters, to the same person, it is clear that she remained obdurate, like Mrs. Trotter.

John Hopkins at first night of *A Trip to the Jubilee*: E. Gosse, *Gossip in a Library*, 113.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Success of the play: Farquhar's own preface to it; *A Comparison between the Two Stages*, Wells ed., 32-33. Wilks as Wildair: B. Victor, *Hist. of the Theatres of London and Dublin*, 1761, II, 53. Elizabeth Inchbald, *British Theatre*, 1806-9, 25 vols., says of the *Jubilee* in VIII, 3: 'Courage is a whimsical virtue . . . Farquhar, abashed on exhibiting his person on the stage, sent boldly thither his own indecorous thoughts and was rewarded for his audacity.' *Vid.* also E. Curll, 1718, *op. cit.*, iii.

John Corye on Farquhar: J. Doran, *op. cit.*, I, 258.

CHAPTER VII

A Saturday Night's Adventure: from *A Pacquet from Will's*. This episode seems to be dated, from its reference to tickets for the *Jubilee*, well within the first season of that play, in 1700; the *Pacquet* was announced for publication in the *Post Boy* for March 13-15, 1701.

Sir Roger Mostyn and Anne Oldfield: Chetwood, *Hist. of the Stage*, 44.

Jubilee Dicky: Sir James Ware, *op. cit.*, III, 263, reports this conversation between Dicky and Tom Durfey, who wanted to bring on a play of his own in Drury Lane:

Durfey: Will the humour in your *Constant Couple* last forever?

Dicky: No, no; the Trip that is making in it (*sic*) to this Jubilee will surely be at an end by the Revolution of the next.

Vanbrugh to the Earl of Manchester: J. C. Hodges, *Congreve the Man*, 1941, 67.

Letters to Mrs. C——, to Susanna Carroll, and to his mistress Celia: all from *A Pacquet from Will's*, i.e., all written before March 1701. Likewise the answers of Susanna Carroll to Farquhar.

Mrs. Carroll (Mrs. Centlivre): J. Galt, *op. cit.*, I, 121; J. W. Boyer, *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xliii, 1928.

Vv. to Sam Briscoe: *Love and Business*.

Vv. to Farquhar on the *Jubilee*: *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*, published March 24 (1701). In this same volume are the letters to and from the editor himself, Abel Boyer; the letters to and from 'Charles Ustick'; to and from 'Chloe'; and Jane Wiseman's complaint to Susanna Carroll. The concluding letter is that of 'Mr. Farquhar to Mr. R—— S——.' Though the series to 'Penelope' are all in *Love and Business*, which was not published until the end of February 1702 (*vid.* the advt. in the *Post-man*, February 26-28), Lintot paid Farquhar for the material in the book as early as July 3, 1701 (*vid.* John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the 18th Century*, VIII, 296). It would appear therefore that the undated letters in both volumes were written at the latest within a few months of one another.

Penelope's identity with Anne Oldfield: *Biog. Brit.*, 1750, article on Farquhar.

Farquhar at Dryden's funeral: This letter, to 'Penelope', in *Love and Business*, can of course be precisely dated, May 13, 1700.

From the context of the letters in the various volumes, it is not very difficult to approximate the dates, or at least the chronology, of the undated

NOTES

ones. Some appear purposely misdated a little, as if to afford an alibi to the ladies concerned. But most of the letters seem either wholly genuine or based upon personal experiences. The first two, however, in *Wit, Politicks and Morality*, lack any shadow of concreteness, and are too vague to be real. All four volumes which contain letters or verses by and to Farquhar, also contributions by one to another of his friends who agitated themselves over his affairs of the heart, were published within twenty-one months, from May 1700 to February 1702.

In a disentangled arrangement of the entire correspondence, Vol. II of *The Works of George Farquhar*, Nonesuch ed., C. Stonehill, 1930, groups this material under four sections, briefly: *Familiar and Courtly Letters*, *A Packet from Will's*, *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*, and *Love and Business*.

CHAPTER VIII

Blackmore: Sir Richard Blackmore, physician to the King. He too had written a *Satyr against Wit*.

Jane Wiseman: author of a single play, a tragedy, *Antiochus the Great*, produced at LIF, 1702. (See A. Nicoll, *Hist. of Early 18th Century Drama*, 104, 160.) She married, after 1706, a vintner named Holt. (J. Whincop, *op. cit.*, 302.) Mrs. Wiseman's probable kinship to Capel Wiseman, Bishop of Dromore, and thus to Farquhar's mother, adds interest to Farquhar's fleeting attachment to this author. 'Jane Wiseman' was a family name with the Essex Wisemans. (See *Harleian Soc., Essex Visitation*, Wiseman.)

The letters or verses concerning the escapades of Farquhar with Susanna Carroll, Jane Wiseman, and 'Chloe', and the letters to and from 'Charles Ustick' and Abel Boyer, referred to in the notes to Chapter VII, but quoted here, are all in *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*. The letters to 'Celia' conclude *A Packet from Will's*.

Farquhar at Harwich: Letter to Sam Briscoe, August 10, 1700, in *Love and Business*.

Farquhar and the Dutch language: D. F. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, 204, quoting 'Moxon's edition', 66. E. Moxon (1851) was then publisher of Leigh Hunt's 'Restoration Dramatists'. *Vid.* note under Chap. XI below.

CHAPTER IX

The voyage to Holland: Letter to Briscoe, *vid. sup.*

Letter to Susanna Carroll (dated August 6): from *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*. The next letter to Mrs. Carroll is dated August 11, and the one to 'Charles Ustick' August 18. It is true that these letters contain no references to Holland; in view of the 'new style' calendar on the Continent, and the 'old style' then still used in England, Farquhar may have written all three in England, when out of London but still in the country, just before he sailed. Whatever the exact chronology of the letters, it would not affect his relations with the women involved.

Farquhar and the shipping merchant: *vid.* final note to Chapter II.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Farquhar's illness: same letter, dated at Leyden, from Briscoe.

Letter of October 12 (October 23, new style): from the Hague, in *Love and Business*. The flood in Holland: do.

Farquhar on Dutch women: *The Inconstant*, Act I, Sc. 2.

The party with the young officers: letter of October 12, *vid. sup.*

The King as Augustus, etc.: dedication of *Sir Harry Wildair*.

A lady rescued from a villain in Holland: from a letter in *Love and Business*, written by Farquhar after his return to England, whilst he was still in the country, probably in Essex, about February 1701. Upon this anonymous lady, also returned to England, he was now pressing his affections.

His 'military red coat': L. I. Guiney, *op. cit.*, 120. Not to be taken too literally; if Farquhar did return in uniform, he did so in jest, as one accompanying the officers. He did not actually join the Army until 1704.

The flirtation in church: from the section of *Love and Business* called *A Collection of Letters*. The six letters bearing upon this adventure, including the assignation at Bedlam, Farquhar published oddly enough in this order: C, E, F, D, A, B. Between letters A and B he republished the letter that had originally appeared as the first one in *A Pacquet from Will's*.

The letter to Mr. R—— S——: for Steele's affair with the daughter of Richard Tonson, *vid.* Willard Connely, *Sir Richard Steele*, 58–9. (Farquhar's letter, *vid.* notes to Chapter VII, is the final one in *Letters of Wit, Politicks and Morality*.)

Farquhar ill in Richmond: next to the last letter in *Love and Business*.

CHAPTER X

Porphyry: Farquhar, who had learnt more at Trin. Coll., Dublin, than he ever liked to acknowledge, quoted *Quae genus* from the beginning of the *Isagoge*, Sect. 1, *De genere*: 'Cum sit necessarium, Chrysaori, et ad eam quae est apud Aristotelem praedicamentorum doctrinam nosse, quid genus sit. . .'

The sum paid for *Love and Business*: Lintot's accounts for July 1701, quoted by John Nichols, *op. cit.*, VIII, 296.

'Motteux and Durfey are for nothing fit': quoted by R. W. Lowe, *Life of Betterton*, 165–7.

Farquhar's adieu to his elusive lady: final letter in *Love and Business*. (Possibly fictitious, like other letters mentioned above.)

CHAPTER XI

Love and Business: the *Post-man*, February 26–28, 1702, advertised this book as 'this day published'.

A Wild Goose Chase: for a detailed comparison of this comedy with *The Inconstant* see A. C. Sprague, *Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage*, 1925, 249 ff.

Mrs. Inchbald: introd. to *The Inconstant*, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII.

Farquhar as a reader of his own plays: Leigh Hunt, *Dramatic Works of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar*, 1840, xlviii.

NOTES

Farquhar on Motteux's *Beauty in Distress: Adventures of Covent Garden*. Failure of *The Inconstant*: D. E. Baker, *op. cit.*, says it was 'entirely owing to French and Italian competition'.

Farquhar in *A Comparison between the Two Stages*: ed. S. B. Wells, 1942, 13, 32-33, 92-94. It is not difficult to agree with this editor and with Mr. J. D. Briscoe (whom he quotes) that, contrary to generations of surmises, this work was not written by Charles Gildon. While one need hardly labour any suggestion that Farquhar himself had a hand in bits of the *Comparison*, much of it, in his manner, is spirited, natural, using contrast to individualize its speakers; and it shows Farquhar's double sympathy for classic drama and for reform. The author, or authors, of the *Comparison* favour a play which ends with a moral, and Farquhar had just written one.

CHAPTER XII

Farquhar's debt to Longueville: preface to *The Twin Rivals*.

Longueville a fencing-master: *Biog. Brit.*, 1750, on Farquhar.

The cast in *She Would and She Would Not*: G., 255.

Sum paid to Farquhar for his MS.: J. Nichols, *op. cit.*, VIII, 296.

Farquhar on *The Twin Rivals*: preface to the play.

Percentage taken by Rich at each performance: Robins, Anne Oldfield, 77.

Run of *The Twin Rivals* for thirteen nights: *WP*, x.

Mrs. Phipps the midwife: Willard Connely, *Sir Richard Steele*, 79.

Farquhar and the deserted galleries: the harder to bear since he had grown accustomed to seeing them 'so crowded' at *A Trip to the Jubilee*, *vid. A Comparison between the Two Stages*, 32.

CHAPTER XIII

Religio Poetae and *The Twin Rivals*: quoted in *Biog. Brit.*, 1750, on Farquhar.

Davenant: in twenty-seven plays he wrote three comedies, whose 'wit' reveals little kinship with that of Farquhar.

Gildon and Manning in 1703; G., 275; A. Nicoll, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

Margaret Pemell: *PP*, her petitions to the Queen, 1708. (When Prof. Sutherland published this material in 1937 he omitted a few additional details, mentioned in the notes below, and now drawn from the documents by kind permission of the Duke of Portland.)

Her age: since Mrs. Farquhar testified early in 1708 that her eldest son (by Pemell) had 'very lately' died after having been in the Navy 'above six years', the boy must have been born about 1688, when his mother, at the youngest estimate, would have been about twenty.

Her 'pursuit' of Farquhar: Tom Brown, *Memoirs*, 1704, appendix, p. 19; *CM*, vi; *Biog. Brit.*, Farquhar; T. Cibber, *op. cit.*, III, 130; *WP*, ix; T. Colby, *op. cit.*, 91-3.

Farquhar in debt at the time: *Athenaeum*, January 2, 1841, anon. review of Leigh Hunt, *op. cit.*

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

The Stage-Coach: the late Crompton Rhodes, in *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, October 1933, 482-4, refers to an ed. of this play by George Risk, Dublin, 1728, 'to which is prefixed the life and character of Mr. George Farquhar'. But Risk had first published this edition in 1719. (A copy is in the Library of the University of Chicago.) Risk himself had printed his edition from the original published by Curll in May 1718. (A copy is in the New York Public Library.)

Wilks and *The Stage-Coach*: P. Kavanagh, *Irish Theatre*, 1946, 199.

Les Carrosses d'Orléans: In the original of La Chapelle, Cléante and Angélique make their escape in Scene 19; throughout the remaining eight scenes the rest of the cast merely talk about that escape.

Salaries of the players in the early 18th century: A. Nicoll, *op. cit.*, 276-7.

Prologue to *The Careless Shepherdess*: The pilfering of these lines was first noted by W. J. Lawrence, *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, October 1932, 392-97.

Date of the first performance: *vid.* first note to Chapter XIV, below.

The cast: though G. gives this cast for February 2, 1704, he says it was probably the original one, since the première occurred such a short time before.

The ten-night run of *The Stage-Coach*: *WP*, ix.

Farquhar 'about a twelvemonth married' by the end of 1703: *Biog. Brit.*, 1750, Farquhar.

Geographical dispersion in Farquhar's comedies: first noted by Tucker Brooke, ed. *The Recruiting Officer* (with other plays), 1936, 673.

CHAPTER XIV

The Different Widows: date of publication December 1703: *Term Catalogues*, iii, 371. Quoted by A. Nicoll, *op. cit.*, 352. G. suggests 'it has every appearance of being a summer play'. If it was, it could have been played by the 'summer company' as early as the end of August 1703. But in that case there would have been no point in delaying its publication until December. George Powell played the lead. He left LIF to go over to DL at the end of the 1703-4 season.

The Female Wits: G., 101-4.

Extent of run of plays by Mary Pix: Downes, quoted by G., 330, says *The Conquest of Spain* 'expired on the sixth day'. Evidently that was the high record for Mrs. Pix.

The Duke of Ormonde and Farquhar's commission: *PP*, first certificate attached to Mrs. Farquhar's petition to the Queen, the certificate being dated 'Cockpitt, January 28, 1708'. (Ormonde was Lt. of Ireland from September 1703 to June 1705.)

Farquhar's 'interest to procure a lieutenancy': Sir James Ware, *op. cit.*, III, 263.

Wilks and Orrery: D. F. McCarthy, *op. cit.*, 202.

Orrery commissioned a colonel: *Complete Peerage*, X, 179.

Orrery's friendship for Farquhar: M. Campenon, *Theatre Anglais*, 1823, V, 338.

Other contemporary Farquhars in the Army: *Dalton's Army Lists*.

NOTES

Date of Farquhar's commission (at the time Orrery's regiment was formed in March 1704): Add. MSS., BM, 9762, f. 143.

English partisans of French and Italian players in London: *Biog. Brit.*, 1750, Farquhar.

'Is it so, then?' said Farquhar: do. Quoted from *The Trial of Skill*, p. 8.

Pay of a lieut. of foot: Add. MSS., 9762, *vid. sup.*

Tom Brown's *Memoirs*: a copy of its rare Appendix, 1704, is in the Bodleian. The view that Farquhar was 'just' to his consort to the point of complete forgiveness was rightly doubted by W. Archer, introd. to the *Mermaid* ed. of Farquhar, 1906, p. 10.

Purpose of Farquhar's visit to Dublin: *WP*, ix.

Peyton Farquhar: records of the Dublin Guild, *vid. sup.*, Chap. I.

George and Peyton Farquhar in Castle Street: *WP*, ix.

Eliphal Dobson and Jacob Miller: Dublin Guild, *vid. sup.*

Farquhar as *Sir Harry Wildair*, acting in the *Jubilee*: Chetwood, *Hist. of the Stage*, 152; T. Wilkes, *General View of the Stage*, 312; *WP*, x. Wilkes in the *General View* says 'Farquhar's friends blushed to see him act Harry Wildair'.

His interview with Ormonde: *WP*, x. His £100 receipts: T. Wilkes, *General View*, 312. Failure to publish collected *Works*: *WP*, x.

Anne Oldfield: B. Victor, *Hist. of the Theatres of London and Dublin*, 1761, II, 55.

Name of Farquhar's first child: *Athenaeum*, *vid. sup.*

Dedication of the London ed. of *The Stage-Coach*: W. J. Lawrence, *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, *vid. sup.*, questions whether this was written by Farquhar, because it was not signed. But 'a piece I lately published', which 'spared not nearest relations', i.e., twin brothers, can refer only to *The Twin Rivals*. Again, if Farquhar according to the epilogue 'begged no fame', nor 'sought a poet's name', he may well have been indifferent to signing a dedication to an adapted after-piece. There remains the possibility that the signature was left off by a printer's oversight. As to Samuel Bagshaw, unfortunately nothing is known of him outside this dedication.

In 1728 George Risk the Dublin bookseller, taking advantage of Chetwood's (sixth) ed. of Farquhar which with its original memoir of the dramatist had in that year appeared in London, published a counterpart of the Chetwood ed. to which he added his separate ed. of *The Stage-Coach* as reprinted in 1719 from Curll's ed. of the year before. Risk's ed. also carried a new prologue and epilogue to the farce. 'A new prologue,' the page read, 'spoken upon the revival of this comedy, at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, some years since, when acted for the benefit of the author. Written by Mr. Samuel Philips.' Also across the top of the epilogue ran the line, 'Written by Mr. Philips'.

Who was Samuel Philips? Other than Ambrose Philips the only Philips (Phillips) mentioned by Genest was a 'young gentleman from Oxford', who with a few more undergraduates came to DL on July 7, 1704, to act 'for their diversion' the men's parts in Otway's *Orphan*. Phillips played Chamont, and 'performed afterwards', that is, became evidently a professional actor. But G. does not mention him again. (Nor does A. Nicoll list a Samuel Philips.)

If this undergraduate was Samuel Philips, how long after his appearance as an amateur at DL did he join the company at LIF? When that new prologue

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

said 'for the benefit of the author', did it mean the author of the farce (Farquhar) or the author of the prologue (Philips)? Like the prologue to Mrs. Pix's *The Different Widows*, this prologue also speaks of 'poor Monimia', as if Philips were writing against the same meagre theatrical season of 1703-4. But Philips goes on to say:

'. . . we here this night present you
With something new, which will, we hope, content you . . .'

The performance of *The Stage-Coach* for which Philips was writing was according to the headline over the prologue a 'revival'. How long after the original first night of the farce could a revival of it still refer to *The Stage-Coach* as 'something new'?

The epilogue, spoken by the character Captain Basil as a newly-wed, whom Philips calls 'the credulous wretch fast in the marriage gin', would if written in Farquhar's lifetime have fallen oddly upon the ears of an audience aware of Lieutenant Farquhar's own recent ill-considered wedding. Tom Brown himself could not have excelled it for sarcasm. Did Farquhar know of this epilogue beforehand? If he did, could he have sanctioned, not to say promoted, what sounded like a satire against himself?

There are too many queries tangled up with this 'revival' to attempt to date it within the lifetime of Farquhar. Lawrence and Rhodes, *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, *vid. sup.*, debated the problem, but to no fruitful outcome. Rhodes did not know Risk had annexed Curll's ed., and Lawrence did not even know that Risk's ed. existed. (A copy of this rare Dublin ed. which combined Curll and Chetwood is in the Dyce Collection, Vict. and Alb. Museum.)

Lord Stanhope in Lichfield: Willard Connely, *The True Chesterfield*, 11-12.

Farquhar in Lichfield: T. Harwood, *Hist. and Antiquities of the Church and City of Lichfield*, 1806, 501. A portrait of the landlord of the George Inn (John Harrison) was to be seen in Lichfield as late as 1775 (*WP*, xiii).

Sir M. Biddulph in Sadler Street: Information kindly given by Mr. P. Laithwaite, the Johnson Society, Lichfield.

Elmhurst: R. Plot, *Natural Hist. of Staffs.*, 1686, 29; Erdeswick, *Survey of Staffs.*, ed. Harwood, 304-5. Farquhar at Elmhurst: *Grand Magazine*, December 28, 1758.

Thomas Bond: *Notes & Queries*, 11, XI, 149.

Sergeant Jones: G., 355-6, quotes Wilkes, *View of the Stage*, 1759: 'the hint of this character (Kite) was furnished by a sergeant in the regiment to which Farquhar belonged - his real name was Jones'.

Recruiting: Maurice de Saxe, *Reveries, or Memoirs upon the Art of War*, 1757, *passim*.

Lord Orrery on Farquhar: *PP*, second certificate, January 26, 1708, attached to Margaret Farquhar's petition.

Name of Farquhar's second child: *Athenaeum*, *vid. sup.*

'The Raven,' and its sign: *Notes & Queries*, 9, I, 241; Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Notes of Travel* (September 1855), I, 332.

Shrewsbury: Hawthorne, *op. cit.*, 322-32; C. Hulbert, *Hist. and Antiquities of Shrewsbury*, 1837, I, 6, 45. (See also Hawthorne's *Note-Books*, ed. Randall Stewart, 1942.)

NOTES

Farquhar on Shrewsbury: dedication in *The Recruiting Officer* to 'All Friends round the Wrekin'.

His acquaintance in Shrewsbury: Archdeacon Owen and J. B. Blakeway, *Hist. of Shrewsbury*, I, 501. The authors got their information from Mrs. Anne Blakeway, who knew Farquhar in Shrewsbury in 1706. (The letter on this subject from E. Blakeway to Bishop T. Percy is relatively incomplete and inaccurate.) See also *Notes & Queries*, 9, I, 242.

CHAPTER XV

Retirement of Vanbrugh: L. Whistler, *op. cit.*, 93 ff.

Farquhar on his new play: dedication of *The Recruiting Officer*.

Room at 'The Raven' in which Farquhar wrote: Hawthorne, *op. cit.*, I, 332.

Identity of the characters in *The Recruiting Officer*: Owen and Blakeway, *op. cit.*, I, 501; Sergeant Kite: *WP*, xi.

Farquhar raising recruits to the prejudice of rearing his family: *PP*, second certificate, Orrery, *vid. sup.*

Farquhar and Ben Jonson: Farquhar's debt to his master is still more apparent if one has seen both Volpone and Kite on the stage.

Dorothy Harnage and Melinda: Kite as astrologer said Melinda would die a maid; Dorothy Harnage did, in 1743, aged 68. (*Notes & Queries*, 9, I, 242.)

Ormonde and Orrery on *The Recruiting Officer*: dedication.

Sum paid for the MS. of the play: Lintot's accounts, J. Nichols, *op. cit.*, VIII, 296.

Anne Oldfield's morals: T. Cibber, *op. cit.*, III, 132. Mistress (aged 21) of Maynwaring: *Memoirs of Anne Oldfield*, 1731, p. 4. After Maynwaring died in 1712 'having loved with a passion that had hardly been stronger had it been both her and his first love', Anne speedily became the mistress of Marlborough's nephew Charles Churchill, of whom the satirist Chas. Hanbury Williams wrote:

'None led through youth a gayer life than he,
Cheerful in converse, smart in repartee;
Sweet was his night and joyful was his day—
He dined with Walpole and with Oldfield lay.'

B. Victor, *op. cit.*, further quotes C. Cibber on Anne: 'In the wearing of her person she was particularly fortunate, her figure always improving to her thirty-sixth year' (1719). G., III, 262, adds from Cibber: 'She had everything she asked, which she took care should always be reasonable, for she hated as much to be grudging as denied a civility'.

June 22, 1706: G., 341, states that Farquhar's 'Prologue on the Proposed Union of the Two Houses' was spoken on this evening at DL. If this is so, it too was a 'revival', since these verses had been published in *Love and Business* four years earlier. Its most quoted lines are:

'For to one house confin'd, you then must praise
Both cursed actors, and confounded plays.'

Farquhar of course was writing on behalf of Rich, who bitterly opposed, and defeated, the union of the two companies.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Steele on Estcourt as Kite: *Tatler*, 20. On Estcourt's comic talent in general: *Spectator*, 358 and 468.

Extent of use of epilogues: *Spectator*, 341: 'Epilogues . . . are drop'd after the third representation of the play'.

CHAPTER XVI

Estcourt's laetification: John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, ed. Knight, 1886.

Steele on Wilks and Cibber: *Tatler*, 182. Again on Cibber: *Spectator*, 546. Wilks as Wildair: *Tatler*, 201. Steele on Bullock: *Tatler*, 7. On Anne Oldfield: *Tatler*, 10. Cibber on Oldfield: *Apology*, 159 (Everyman ed.). See also Clarke Russell, *Representative Actors*, 59-62.

Otway and Lee as actors: John Downes, *op. cit.*, 34. See also R. G. Ham, *Otway and Lee*, 1931, 29.

Actors' benefit nights: Cyril Davis, *vid. sup.*; A. Nicoll, *op. cit.*, 282.

Farquhar's poverty: *CM*, vi. His lodgings: *WP*, xi.

York Buildings: Willard Connely, *Sir Richard Steele*, 286, 388.

Farquhar's ailment: L. I. Guiney, in her searching and able study of Farquhar, *op. cit.*, 1894, 120 ff., states that Farquhar suffered from tuberculosis.

Source of Farquhar's information for *Barcelona*: preface, by Margaret Farquhar, to the poem; *Biog. Brit.*, Farquhar.

His appeal to Ormonde for assistance: *WP*, xi, devotes a long but inaccurate paragraph to this episode. As *PP* have revealed, Farquhar did not sell his commission. Apparently the General helped his subaltern neither with funds nor with workable suggestions.

The Recruiting Officer at Bath: *G.*, 340.

Congreve to Keally: D. C. Taylor, *William Congreve*, 193-4.

The Recruiting Officer at Dorset Gardens: *G.*, 355. Cibber at the Haymarket: *G.*, 358. Oldfield and Bracegirdle: *G.*, 359.

Farquhar's illness: preface to *Barcelona*; *PP*, Margaret Farquhar's first petition to the Queen.

His physician: Suggested (but not certain) by mention of Dr. Shadwell in Margaret Farquhar's letter to Vice-Chamberlain Coke, Add. MSS., 38607, f. 92, BM.

'It was more pain': Chetwood, *Hist. of the Stage*, 151. (This quotation is evidence that the account of Farquhar's life given by Wilks to Chetwood came from Farquhar direct.)

Farquhar as a continual visitor to the theatre, and the call of Robert Wilks at York Buildings: *WP*, xi.

CHAPTER XVII

Farquhar and Wilks in the garret: *WP*, xi. (Writing in 1775, Thomas Wilkes says he got this information from Colley Cibber, d. 1757.)

Farquhar and Milton: M. A. Larson, *Publ. of Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, March 1924.

NOTES

Indigence of Farquhar's married life: *CM*, vi. 'His poverty led him into a great many cares and inconveniences.' *WP*, xv. 'His straitened circumstances prevented his mingling with persons of rank.'

Characters in the new play: the landlord at the inn, and the servant (Thomas Bond) at Elmhurst: *WP*, xiii.

Approval of the plot by Wilks: *WP*, xiii.

Elmhurst as part of the scene in the play: *A Guide to the City of Litchfield*, 1853, 32, says, however, that Dean's Walk, in front of the Palace, was the road described by Farquhar as leading to the house (Lady Bountiful's).

Farquhar's tribute to Wilks: 'advertisement' prefixed to *The Beaux Stratagem*.

His collapse when writing Act II: *Athenaeum*, *vid. sup.*; *CM*, v; L. I. Guiney, *op. cit.*, 130.

Influence of Farquhar's ailment upon his writing: A reviewer in *TLS* (June 21, 1947, biography of W. E. Henley) derides the discussion of such a matter by biographers. But it cannot be neglected in instances of evident or known pulmonary tuberculosis, as the cases of Keats, the Brontës, Stevenson, Francis Thompson attest, to name only a few. Dr. G. B. Webb, late of Guy's Hospital, an authority on tuberculosis, has observed that biographers who take too little account of such pathological symptoms 'often misinterpret ruling traits of character in their subject'.

The symptoms in Farquhar: See Chas. Whibley, *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, VIII, 169: if he could *perceive* the approaches of death, tuberculosis was indicated.

Origin of Foigard: W. J. Lawrence, *Notes & Queries*, 9, XI, 46-7. *Vid. Pepys' Diary*, February 6, 1664.

Farquhar and Milton: References are to *The Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Chas. Symmons, 1806, Vols. I and II:

'Nay, instead of being one flesh . . . dead corpse': II, 38.

'Natural hatred . . . greater injustice': II, 43.

'They (men) would be juster . . . sorrow and offence': II, 44.

'To forbid dislike . . . law to reach': II, 55.

'God did not authorize . . . kind of trial': II, 53.

'The radical and innocent . . . tamper with': II, 54.

'That indisposition . . . mutual consent': I, 347-8.

'To couple hatred . . . rope of sand': II, 55.

'But because this is such a secret kind . . . civil offence': II, 57.

'The law can only appoint . . . conditions of divorce': II, 58.

'The solace and satisfaction . . . pleasing of the body': I, 350.

'This is that rational burning . . . remedy': I, 354.

'What can be fouler incongruity . . . unite': I, 369.

'Marriage is a human society . . . no human society': I, 373.

'The greatest breach . . . unfitness of mind': I, 373.

'The unity of mind . . . union of bodies': II, 137.

'There is no power . . . unjoining': II, 40.

'There can be nothing . . . not be lawful': II, 174.

'Not he who puts away . . . commits adultery': II, 196.

Farquhar's own choice of the actors for the several parts, e.g., Cibber for Scrub: *WP*, xiv.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

CHAPTER XVIII

- Lintot's payment for *The Beaux Stratagem*: J. Nichols, *op. cit.*, VIII, 296.
 Proposed dedication to Cadogan: *CM*, v.
 Immediate publication of the play: *Daily Courant*, February 7, 1707.
 Farquhar on duration of his own life: *Athenaeum*, *vid. sup.*
 Benefit performances for Estcourt, Mills, and Bullock: *G.*, 356, 357-8.
 Ann Oldfield's objection: *WP*, xiii.
 The cuts recommended by Steele: *WP*, xiv.
 Farquhar and Heywood, C. Whibley, *op. cit.*, VIII, 172.
 The 'needful support': *vid. sup.*, note toward end of Chapter XVI.
 Farquhar's last letter to Wilks: Chetwood, *Hist. of the Stage*, 152.
 The burning of his papers: *CM*, vi.
 His last verses: Chetwood, *Hist. of the Stage*, 152.
 Death of Farquhar on his benefit day: *Athenaeum*, *vid. sup.*
 Sorrow of the audience: L. I. Guiney, *op. cit.*, 130.
 Wycherley in 1707: Willard Connely, *Brawny Wycherley*, 284-5.
 Congreve: *vid.* his portrait, at 38, J. C. Hodges, *op. cit.* His opera: D. C. Taylor, *op. cit.*, 198-9.
 Burial of Farquhar: Register, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Payment for it by Wilks: *WP*, xiii.

EPILOGUE

The printer of *Barcelona*: this poem was not taken by Lintot, but was published by R. Standfast, who had brought out *Love and a Bottle*.

The Queen's gift to Farquhar's widow: HMC, Portland, IV, 415.

The Duchess of Ormonde assists Mrs. Farquhar: *PP*, second petition of Margaret Farquhar to the Queen.

Duke of Bolton: succeeded 1699, having previously been Marquess of Winchester.

Mrs. Farquhar to Harley: HMC, Portland, *vid. sup.*

Benefit performance of the *Jubilee*: *G.*, 402. Given by Wilks: *Athenaeum*, *vid. sup.*

Mrs. Farquhar to Coke: Add. MSS. 38607, f. 92, BM.

Lady Burlington: *PP*, second petition of Margaret Farquhar to the Queen.

Eloas Knight: Thieme Becker, *Künstler Lexicon*; R. L. Poole, *Catalogue of Oxford Portraits*, Vol. III; *BM Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits*, IV, 457. Sampson's portrait of White, in the Oxford Town Hall, was painted in 1597.

A copy of the second (1710) edition of *Barcelona* is in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

The illustrations by Knight were reprinted in the three subsequent octavo eds. of Farquhar: 1711, 1714, 1718. Thereafter, beginning in 1721, all eds. of Farquhar's *Works* in the 18th century were 12mo, some of them not illustrated, and others with 'modern' scenes from the plays.

Chaloner appeals to Harley: J. R. Sutherland, *TLS*, March 6, 1937.

NOTES

Death of Margaret Farquhar: The date, probably between December 1715 and May 1716, is suggested by the fact that the benefit given at the latter time by Wilks was *only* for 'the orphan children'. In arranging in May for their apprenticeship, Wilks appears to have become their guardian. *CM*, in 1728, speaks of Farquhar's 'wife being long since dead'.

The benefit: *G.*, 601; *Memoirs of Wilks*, p. 33.

Mrs. Farquhar's indigence: D. E. Baker, *Biog. Dram.*, I, 230-1.

Wilks's earnings per season: *Biog. Brit.*, article on Anne Oldfield.

Wilks's relations in Ireland: J. Doran, *op. cit.*, I, 440. His second wife: *Memoirs of Wilks*, 1733, p. 22. Incidentally it is rather expansively observed on p. 20:

'Farquhar by writing gained himself a name,
And by Wilks, Farquhar gained immortal fame.'

Death of Chaloner, the pension for Anne Marguerite and Mary, and its transfer to Wilks as guardian: Bodl. MSS., *Warrants for Pensions*, 1716-30, f. 21.

Burial of Wilks: B. Victor, *op. cit.*, II, 53.

Marriage and death of Mary Farquhar, and subsequent life of Anne Marguerite: D. E. Baker, *op. cit.*, I, 230-1; Leigh Hunt, *op. cit.*, lxix. Garrick's benefit for her (December 19, 1750): Genest, IV, 320.

INDEX

- Agnes de Castro*, by Catherine Trotter, 84.
- Aimwell, Tom, character in *The Beaux Stratagem*, 274, 276.
- Albemarle, the Earl of, 146, 147, 170, 183.
- All for the Better; or The Infallible Cure*, by Francis Manning, 203.
- Allison, Maria, actress, 76.
- A New Session of Poets, Occasion'd by the Death of Dryden*, by Daniel Kendrick, 126, 223.
- Archer, Frank, character in *The Beaux Stratagem*, 274, 276.
- Art of War (memoir in French), 235.
- Asgill, John, 125.
- Ashbury, Joseph, manager of Smock Alley Theatre, 39-40, 41, 88, 228.
- Gives G. Farquhar stage training, 44.
- Ashe, St. George, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, 27, 36.
- As You Find It*, by the Hon. Charles Boyle, 208.
- Bagshaw, Samuel, to whom *The Stage-Coach* was dedicated, 231.
- Baker, Thomas, 209.
- Battle of the Books*, by Jonathan Swift, 50.
- Bayly, Thomas, companion to G. Farquhar at Donnybrook Fair, 33-35.
- Beauty in Distress*, by Peter Motteux, 181.
- Bedford, 2nd Duke of, patron of Anne Oldfield, 88.
- Beggar's Opera, The*, by John Gay, 315.
- Behn, Aphra, dramatist, 225.
- Bennet, Isabella, married to Thomas Hanmer, 146.
- Berkeley, Francis, 238, 242.
- Berkeley, Laconia, 238, 242.
- Betterton, Thomas, actor, 40, 41, 52, 104, 214.
- Bicknell, Mrs., actress, 296.
- Biddulph, Charlotte, 233.
- Biddulph, Lady, 274.
- Biddulph, Sir Michael, Bt., 233-34, 274.
- Biddulph, Susannah, 233.
- Bisarre, character from *The Inconstant*, by G. Farquhar, 179-81.
- Blosum's Inn, Cheapside, 54.
- Blue Posts, The, tavern in Spring Gardens, 53.
- Bond, Thomas, servant to the Biddulph family, 234, 274, 275.
- Bonner, Robert, part headmaster of Derry Free School, 20.
- Booth, Barton, actor, 214-15, 311, 315.
- Bowen, William, actor, 45, 46, 191, 296, 300.
- Bowman, John, actor, 128, 296.
- Boyer, Abel, 104, 109-110, 111, 131, 170.
- Boyle, Hon. Charles, later Earl of Orrery, 49-50, 58, 208, 222-23, 235, 241, 247, 259, 260.
- Bracegirdle, Anne, actress, 52, 56, 104, 209, 269, 303.
- Bradshaw, Mrs., actress, 296, 300, 306.
- Bret, Henry, M.P. for Bishop's Castle, Salop, to whom *The Twin Rivals* was dedicated, 198, 232-33.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Briscoe, Sam, publisher, 52, 110,
111, 126, 139, 158, 170.

British Enchanters, The, by Lord
Lansdowne, 301.

Brome, C., London publisher, 52.

Brown, Tom, 59, 82, 225-26.

Browne, Dr. George, successor to
St. George Ashe as Provost of
Trinity College, 36.

Bullock, William, actor, 75, 94, 181,
190, 191, 249, 267, 268, 295,
298, 300.

Buononcini, composer of *Camilla*,
249.

Burlington, Countess of, 307.

Butler, Charlotte, member of Smock
Alley Theatre, 45.

Butler, Samuel, author of *Hudibras*,
117.

Cadogan, Earl, 19, 294-95.

Camilla, opera, 249, 256, 257.

Captain Basil, character in *The
Stage-Coach*, 211-13.

Captain Plume, character in *The
Recruiting Officer*, 241-47.

Carmarthen, Marquess of, to whom
Love and a Bottle was dedicated,
84, 85, 183.

Carroll, Mrs. Susannah (Centlivre),
mistress of George Farquhar,
107-110, 119, 123-26, 130-36,
205, 209, 240.

Author of *The Perjured Husband*,
140.

Becomes mistress of G. Farquhar,
125.

Letters written to G. Farquhar,
132-34.

Marriage to Charles Ustick,
140-41.

Marriage to M. Joseph Centlivre,
chef to Queen Anne, 269.

Carroll, Mrs. Susannah—*continued*.

part played by:

Alexander the Great in *Rival
Queens*, by Nat Lee, 268-69.

Poetry written to 'Mr. Farquhar
upon his Comedy called *A Trip
to the Jubilee*', 112.

Verses written to G. Farquhar,
129-30.

Cathedral of St. Columba, Derry, 22.
'Celia', mistress of George Farquhar,
119-23.

Centlivre, M. Joseph, chef to Queen
Anne, 269.

Centlivre, Mrs., *see* Carroll, Susan-
nah.

Chagrin, speaker in 'A Comparison
Between the Two Stages', 185-
88.

Chaloner, Edmund, 173, 310-11,
312, 313.

Chetwood, W. R., author of a
biography of George Farquhar,
314.

'Chloe', mistress of G. Farquhar,
131-35, 174.

Christian Hero, The, by Sir Richard
Steele, 155.

Cibber, Colley, 41, 52, 58, 73, 87,
153, 166, 193, 198, 208, 209,
215, 240, 267, 268, 311.

parts played by:

Ben Wou'dbee in *The Twin Rivals*,
191, 193-95.

Captain Brazen in *The Recruiting
Officer*, 248, 251-52, 261.

Captain Gibbet in *The Beaux
Stratagem*, 295-96.

Lord Foppington in *The Relapse*,
by Captain Vanbrugh, 58,
60-61.

Sir Novelty Fashion in *Love's
Last Shift*, by Colley Cibber, 58.

INDEX

- Cleenish, Ireland, living of Rev. G. Farquhar, 1634, 13.
- Clones, Ireland, curacy of, relinquished by Rev. G. Farquhar, 1633, 13.
- Coke, Vice-Chamberlain, 306.
- Collier, Jeremy, author of *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, 61-64, 73, 98, 299.
- 'Comparison Between the Two Stages, A', 185-88.
- Confederacy, The*, adapted by John Vanbrugh from *Le Bourgeois à la Mode*, by Dancourt, 240.
- Congreve, William, 50, 56, 62, 73, 84, 90, 236, 274, 303.
- Letter to a friend, Joseph Keally, 267.
- Corbet, Sir John, 236.
- Corye, John, author of *A Cure for Jealousie*, 99-100, 104.
- Council House, Shrewsbury, 237.
- Country Wake, The*, by Thomas Doggett, 215.
- Country Wit, The*, by John Crowne, 222.
- Crauford, David, author of *Courtship à la Mode*, 128-29.
- Crump, Richard, rector of Lissan, County Tyrone, 24.
- Curll, Edmund, 312-13.
- Defense*, by Jeremy Collier, 62.
- Dennis, John, dramatist, 56, 63, 104.
- Dennison, John, part headmaster of Derry Free School, 20.
- Derry, Ireland, 14, 18, 22, 236.
- Derry, siege of, 19.
- Derry Free School, 16-18, 20.
- Devil Tavern, *The*, Temple Bar, 54.
- Devonshire, Duchess of, conveyor of ten guineas from Queen Anne for *Barcelona*, 305.
- Different Widows, The; or, Intrigue All-à-Mode*, by Mary Pix, 221-22.
- Divorce upon the stage, 275.
- Dobson, Eliphaz, Dublin bookseller, 227-28.
- Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, The*, by John Milton, 272, 283-84, 287, 292.
- Doggett, Thomas, actor, 45, 214-15.
- Donnybrook Fair, Dublin, 33-34.
- Double Dealer, The*, by W. Congreve, 62, 63.
- Dryden, John, 56, 59, 62, 111, 117-18, 266.
- Duke of Gloucester (son of Queen Anne), death of, 138.
- Duretete, character in *The Inconstant*, by G. Farquhar, 179-81.
- Durfey, Tom, 58-59, 63, 209, 258, 260.
- English Rogue, The, or the Life of Meriton Latroon*, by Richard Head, 52.
- Essay Concerning Humour in Comedy*, by William Congreve, 158.
- Essex, Lord, godfather of Capel Wiseman, 15.
- Estcourt, Richard, member of Smock Alley Theatre, 45, 46, 248, 250, 259, 260, 267, 268, 269, 276, 296.
- Etherege, George, 73, 92.
- Eyre, John, 308.
- Fairbank, Mr., actor, 191, 248.
- Familiar and Courtly Letters, written by Monsieur Voiture*, 1700, published by Sam Briscoe, 110, 111, 169.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Farquhar, lineage, 14.
 Farquhar, Alexander, son of George, 14.
 Farquhar, Anne Marguerite, daughter of George, 231, 301-02, 305, 311, 314-16.
 Farquhar, Francis, 223.
 Farquhar, George, ability to read Aesop in original Greek, 17, 161.
 Accused of atheism at Trinity College, 33.
 Adaptation of *The Careless Shepherdess*, by Thomas Goffe for epilogue to *The Stage-Coach*, 217-18.
 'A Discourse upon Comedy', 158-63, 211.
 Amount of £100 received from benefit performance of *A Trip to the Jubilee*, 230.
 Anxiety felt for his daughters, 301-02.
A Pacquet from Will's, 169.
 'A Pindarick on the Death of General Schomberg Killed at the Boyne', 23-24.
 Association with Drury Lane and Christopher Rich, 65.
 At Covent Garden, 50-51.
A Trip to Lichfield with a Character of the French Officers there 234.
 Autobiographical comedy, 241.
 Benefit performance of *A Trip to the Jubilee* at Smock Alley, 228-30.
 Birth of, 15.
 Birth of a daughter, Ann Marguerite, 231.
 Birth of a second daughter, Mary, 236.
 Burial of, 303.

Farquhar, George—*continued*.
 Carries the colours in the Battle of the Boyne, 19.
 Challenge to a duel from Mr. Charles Ustick, 134, 140-42.
 Character of at school, 21-22.
 'Christ walking on the waters', discourse on, 32.
Collected Works, 226-27.
 Comes to London with *The Recruiting Officer*, 248.
 Commissioned a Lieutenant of Grenadiers, 222.
 Death of, 303.
 Delayed in the Hague by storms, 144.
 Disappearance of, 270.
 Disciple of John Asgill, 142.
Discourse upon Comedy, 171, 174.
 Discovers Anne Oldfield, 86.
 Donnybrook Fair, excursion to, 33-34.
 Drury Lane, visits, 61.
 Elected a sizarship at Trinity College, Dublin, 25.
 Employed by Joseph Ashbury at Smock Alley Theatre, 43.
 Entertained in Holland by the Earl of Westmorland, 146.
 Epigram on a Dublin riding-house, 31, 174.
 Epigram on the death of Queen Mary, 31, 174.
 Epilogue written for *The Patriot; or, The Italian Conspiracy*, by Charles Gildon, 203.
 Final poem of, 302.
 Given free benefit performance by Smock Alley Theatre Company, 48.
 Given part of Othello, 44.
 Home in York Buildings, London, 263-64.

INDEX

Farquhar, George—*continued.*

Ideas on divorce taken from
Doctrine and Discipline of
Divorce, by John Milton, 283–
85.

Ill with rheumatism, 155–56.

Ill with tuberculosis, 263–64, 280.

Impressions of Holland written
for Sam Briscoe, 139, 174.

Incident in the Fleece Tavern,
54–55.

Incident with a masqued lady,
101–02.

In debt, 263.

In dispute about Jeremy Collier's
publications, 63, 67.

In Lichfield, 233–36.

In London, 50–55.

In Shrewsbury, 236.

Introduction of Milton's views
on divorce into *The Beaux*
Stratagem, 274..

Invites Robert Wilks to London in
1699, 88.

Lands at Brill, Holland, 139.

Leisure of at Trinity College,
29–30.

Letter 'To a gentleman that had
his pocket pickt of a watch and
some gold by a mistress', 111,
174.

Letter to Captain Richard Steele,
154–55.

Letters written to Catherine
Trotter, 91, 92, 105–106.

Letters to Celia, 119–23.

Letter to Charles Ustick, 142.

Letters to Mrs. Susannah Carroll,
107–109, 124, 127–28, 134–36,
140–41.

Letters to Penelope, 113–17, 118,
173–74.

Farquhar, George—*continued.*

letters written:

To Robert Wilks, a farewell from
his death bed, 302, 306.

To 'the fairest lady', 145.

To the lady in black, 149–50,
151–53, 156–57.

To the lady rescued by him in
Holland, 172.

Lodgings in London, 80.

Marriage to Mrs. Margaret
Pemell, 1703, 207.

Meets Robert Wilks, 43.

Meeting with a lady dressed in
black in a church, 149, 279.

Meeting with the lady in black
at Bedlam, 151.

Member of the University of
Dublin, 26.

Mistake made in registration of
father's name at Trinity College,
Dublin, 25.

Occasionary Verse and Epistolary
Prose, 173.

Opinion on the Collier debate,
63–64.

Ordered to Lichfield and Shrews-
bury on recruiting duty, 232.

Parentage of, 16.

parts played by:

Careless in *The Committee*, by Sir
Robert Howard, 46.

Dion in *Philaster* by Beaumont
and Fletcher, 46.

Guyomar in *Indian Emperor, or*
The Conquest of Mexico, by
Dryden, 46, 63, 70.

Lennox in *Macbeth*, 45.

Loveless in *The Scornful Lady*, 46,
86.

Rochford in *Virtue Betrayed, or*
Anne Boleyn, by John Banks, 46.

Farquhar, George—*continued*.

Sir Harry Wildair in *A Trip to the Jubilee* at its benefit performance in Dublin, 229-30.

Young Bellair in *The Man of Mode*, by Etherege, 46.

Payment made by lieutenantancy of £54 15s. od. per annum, 225.

Pindaric on General Schomberg, 174.

plays or books written by:

Adventures of Covent Garden, 66-72, 93, 96, 97, 158, 211, 273.

Adventures of Covent Garden, characters of, 66.

Adventures of Covent Garden, plot of, 68-72.

Adventures of Covent Garden, preface to, 66-67.

The Constant Couple, or, A Trip to the Jubilee, 90, 92, 94-96, 97-99, 104, 105, 126, 129, 153, 188, 263, 273, 309, 310.

A Trip to the Jubilee, benefit performance on May 25, 1708, 306.

A Trip to the Jubilee, dedication of, 103.

A Trip to the Jubilee, plot of, 95-98.

A Trip to the Jubilee, publication of, 103.

A Trip to the Jubilee, reintroduced by Owen Swiney, 300.

A Trip to the Jubilee, scene between Clincher and Dicky, 98.

A Trip to the Jubilee, scene between Lady Lurewell and Parly, 94-95.

A Trip to the Jubilee, scene between Standard and Wildair, 95.

Farquhar, George—*continued*.

Beaux Stratagem, The, 275, 285, 301, 303, 304, 305, 309, 310.

Beaux Stratagem, The, 'advertisement' written instead of a preface, 297-98.

Beaux Stratagem, The, Archer's description of himself, 277.

Beaux Stratagem, The, benefit performance given by David Garrick for Anne Marguerite Farquhar, 316.

Beaux Stratagem, The, boldness of moral in, 299-300.

Beaux Stratagem, The, criticized by Captain R. Steele, 299.

Beaux Stratagem, The, dedication of, to Earl Cadogan, 294-95.

Beaux Stratagem, The, plot of, 276-79, 281-83, 285-92.

Beaux Stratagem, The, prologue of, 297.

Beaux Stratagem, The, read by R. Wilks, Swiney and Bernard Lintot, 294.

Beaux Stratagem, The, reception of, 298.

Beaux Stratagem, The, refusal of dedication by Earl Cadogan, 295.

Beaux Stratagem, The, scene between Archer and Aimwell, 276.

Beaux Stratagem, The, scene between Archer and Cherry, 280-81.

Beaux Stratagem, The, scene between Mrs. Sullen and Dorinda, 285.

Beaux Stratagem, The, scene between Sir Charles Freeman and Boniface, 287-88.

Beaux Stratagem, The, scenes between Sullen and Mrs. Sullen, 284, 291.

INDEX

Farquhar, George—*continued*.

Beaux Stratagem, The, 'Song of a Trifle', sung by Archer, 295.

Beaux Stratagem, The, speeches made by Archer, 291, 292.

Beaux Stratagem, The, written of in the *Daily Courant*, 297.

Inconstant, The, 177-84, 188, 201, 315.

Inconstant, The, book of, 184.

Inconstant, The, dedication of, to Richard Tighe, 183-84.

Inconstant, The, plot of, 178-79.

Inconstant, The, prologue written by Peter Motteux, 181-82.

Inconstant, The, publication of, 183.

Inconstant, The, scene between Bizarre and Duretete, 180-81.

Love and a Bottle, 73-81, 82, 83, 86, 93, 169, 247, 315.

Love and a Bottle, characters of, 74-76.

Love and a Bottle, epilogue of, 81.

Love and a Bottle, publication of, 84-85.

Love and a Bottle, scene between Lovewell and Roebuck, 77-78.

Love and a Bottle, scene between Lucinda and Roebuck, 76-77.

Love and a Bottle, scene between Lyrick and Mrs. Bulfinch, 79-80.

Love and a Bottle, scene between Lyrick and Lovewell, 80.

Love and Business, 171, 173, 176, 188.

Love and Business, dedication of, 173.

Love and Business, personal note to the Reader inserted, 173.

Love and Business, 'The Picture', 175-76, 189, 207, 277.

Farquhar, George—*continued*.

Recruiting Officer, The, 241-59, 262, 268, 269, 273, 274, 292, 310.

Recruiting Officer, The, benefit performance on May 29, 1716, 311.

Recruiting Officer, The, criticisms of by Captain R. Steele, 261.

Recruiting Officer, The, dedication of 'To all Friends round the Wrekin', 259-60.

Recruiting Officer, The, epilogue of, 256.

Recruiting Officer, The, intellectual side of, 263.

Recruiting Officer, The, performance at Bath, 266-67.

Recruiting Officer, The, plot of, 241-47.

Recruiting Officer, The, prologue of, 250.

Recruiting Officer, The, publication of, 259.

Recruiting Officer, The, rivalry over, between the Haymarket Theatre and Drury Lane, 268-270, 276.

Recruiting Officer, The, scene between Captain Brazen and Worthy, 251-52.

Recruiting Officer, The, scene between Kite and Captain Brazen, 254-55.

Recruiting Officer, The, scene between Melinda and Lucy, 254.

Recruiting Officer, The, scene between Silvia and Rose, 253.

Recruiting Officer, The, scene between Silvia and Scale, 255.

Sir Harry Wildair, 147, 153, 166, 169, 315.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

Farquhar, George—*continued.*

Sir Harry Wildair, dedication of, 147, 170.

Sir Harry Wildair, plot of, 162.

Sir Harry Wildair, published as a booklet, 170.

Sir Harry Wildair, scene between Lady Lurewell and Wildair, 164-66.

Sir Harry Wildair, scene between Standard, Angelica, Lurewell and Wildair, 168.

Sir Harry Wildair, scene between Wildair, Angelica, and Standard, 167.

Stage-Coach, The, 211, 227, 247, 273, 292, 315.

Stage-Coach, The, dedication of, to Samuel Bagshaw, 231.

Stage-Coach, The, epilogue of, 217.

Stage-Coach, The, plot of, 212-13.

Stage-Coach, The, production of, 219.

Stage-Coach, The, prologue of, 215.

Stage-Coach, The, publication of, 231.

Stage-Coach, The, published by Edmund Curll with a preface, 313.

Stage-Coach, The, revival of, 301.

Stage-Coach, The, revival of, in November 1705, 240.

Stage-Coach, The, scene between Captain Basil, Nicodemus, and Micher, 216-17.

Stage-Coach, The, scene between Micher and Nicodemus, Jolt and the Constable, 215-16.

Stage-Coach, The, second run of, 222.

Stage-Coach, The, turned into a ballad-opera, 315.

Farquhar, George—*continued.*

Twin Rivals, The, 190, 198, 201, 258, 309, 312, 315.

Twin Rivals, The, epilogue of, 195.

Twin Rivals, The, dedication of, 198.

Twin Rivals, The, plot of, 192-95.

Twin Rivals, The, prologue for written by Peter Motteux, 192.

Twin Rivals, The, publication of, 197.

Twin Rivals, The, scene between Mrs. Mandrake and Ben Wou'd-bee, 199-200.

poems written by:

To Catherine Trotter, 174.

Barcelona, 264, 268, 302, 305.

Barcelona, copy of, sent to Queen Anne by Margaret Farquhar, 305.

Barcelona, new edition of, 310.

Written to celebrate the achievement of Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, 264-65, 302, 305.

Prologue written for *All for the Better; or, The Infallible Cure*, by Francis Manning, 203-4.

Prologue written for *Courtship à la Mode*, 128-29.

Prologue written for the 53rd performance of *A Trip to the Jubilee*, 129.

Prologue written for *The Platonic Lady*, by Susannah Carroll, 268-69, 276.

Pupil in Derry Free School, 16-17. Religious and political disturbances during youth, 18-19.

Rescue of lady compatriot from danger in Holland, 147, 148.

Resemblance to Ben Jonson, 232.

INDEX

Farquhar, George—*continued*.

- Restoration of exhibition on February 1, 1696, 37.
- Resumes writing *The Beaux Stratagem*, 280.
- Return to England from Holland, 147.
- 'Return to the theatre', 249.
- Revisits Dublin, 226.
- Rooms near Gray's Inn Lane, 53.
- Sails to Holland, 137.
- Schoolboy poems of, 18.
- Shakespeare student at Trinity College, 32.
- Starts career of dramatic authorship, 65.
- Starts work as proof-reader, 42-43.
- Stops writing *The Beaux Stratagem* because he 'felt death upon him', 279.
- Stricken with sickness in Rotterdam, 143-44.
- Studies *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, by John Milton, 272.
- Suffering from bibulous illnesses, 116.
- Suffers from stage-fright, 45.
- Temporary loss of exhibition, Trinity College, 35.
- 'To a Lady, being detain'd from visiting her by a Storm', 145, 174.
- Travels to West Chester, England, 48-49.
- Tries his fortunes at the New House, Lincoln's Inn Fields, 201.
- Unhappiness in marriage of, 272-73.
- Urged by R. Wilks to write a new play, 271-72.

Farquhar, George—*continued*.

- Views on matrimony expressed in a scene between Wildair and Lurewell, from *Sir Harry Wildair*, 164-66.
- Visits Leyden, 144.
- Visits Rotterdam, 142.
- Visit to Essex, 152-53.
- Visit to Harwich, 136-37.
- Wild Goose Chase*, by John Fletcher, adaptation of, 177.
- Wins an exhibition of £4, 32.
- Works* of, published by Bernard Lintot as *The Works of the Late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar*, 308.
- Works of the late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar*, fifth edition of, in print, 313.
- Works of the late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar, The*, frontispiece of, showing Ben Jonson presenting George Farquhar to the Nine Muses, 309-10.
- Works of the late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar*, sixth edition of, with biography of George Farquhar, 314.
- Works of the late Ingenious George Farquhar, The*, third edition of, 311.
- Wounds the actor Price with a sword, 47.
- Writes epilogue to *Marriage à la Mode* as a greeting to Robert Wilks, 89.
- Farquhar, Rev. George, 13, 14.
- Farquhar, Hugh, 223.
- Farquhar, John, curate of Lissan, County Tyrone, 24.
- Farquhar, John (senior), Prebendary of Raphoe, 14, 15.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

- Farquhar, Mrs. Margaret, appears before the Lords Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital, 311.
Letter to Robert Harley, 306.
Letter to Vice-Chamberlain Coke, 307.
Renews her petition to Queen Anne, 307-08.
- Farquhar, Mary, second daughter of George, 236, 301-02, 305, 311, 314-16.
- Farquhar, Peyton, brother of George, 15, 19, 24, 28, 37, 42, 226-28, 305.
- Farquhar, Robert, son of George (senior), 14, 223.
- Female Wits, The*, by W. M., 220.
- Fenton, Peter, companion to G. Farquhar at Donnybrook Fair, 33-35, 47.
- Fern, Mr., 55.
- Fitzgerald, Gamaliel, companion to G. Farquhar at Donnybrook Fair, 33-35.
- Fleece Tavern, *The*, 54.
- Fogourdy, Father, original of the character Foigard in *The Beaux Stratagem*, 282.
- Frollick, Sir Frederick, character in Etherege's *Love in a Tub*, 93.
- Funeral, The*, by Captain R. Steele, 181, 209.
- Garrick, David, 316.
- Garth, Dr. Samuel, 117.
- George Inn, Lichfield, 233, 274.
- Gildon, Charles, author of *The Patriot; or The Italian Conspiracy*, 202, 204.
- Goffe, Thomas, author of *The Careless Shepherdess*, 217-18.
- Goldsmith, Oliver, author of *She Stoops to Conquer*, 316.
- Grove, The*, by John Oldmixon, 104, 127, 304.
- Grove, The; or The Rival Muses*, excerpt from *Poems on Affairs of State*, 171.
- Gwyn, Nell, 303.
- Hamilton, Lord George, 19.
- Hamilton, James, fellow-pupil of G. Farquhar, 22, 24, 28.
- Harley, Robert, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, 222-23, 305.
- Harnage, Dorothy, 238, 242.
- Harnage, Edward, 238.
- Harrison, John, landlord of the George Inn, 233, 274.
- Haynes, Joe, comic actor, 57, 74-75, 76, 81, 82, 94, 153, 248.
parts played by:
Sparkish in *Country Wife*, by Wycherley, 57, 74.
Syringe in *The Relapse*, by Captain Vanbrugh, 57, 74.
- Hill, John, 238, 242.
- Hippolito's, Covent Garden, 54.
- Hook, Mrs. Mary, member of Smock Alley Theatre, 45, 46, 190, 191.
- Hopkins, Ezekiel, Bishop of Derry, 18, 20.
- Hopkins, John, 50, 56-57, 68, 98.
- Hotham, Sir Charles, 233.
- Husband, Benjamin, member of Smock Alley Theatre, 45, 315, 190, 191.
- Inchbald, Elizabeth, editor of 'British Theatre', 179.
- Isabella, character in *The Stage-Coach*, 211-13.
- Island Princess*, by Fletcher, adapted by Peter Motteux, 171.

INDEX

- Johnson, Benjamin, actor, 75, 94, 154, 191, 215, 300.
- Jonson, Ben, 243-44, 250, 309.
- Jones, Richard, companion to G. Farquhar at Donnybrook Fair, 34-35, 36, 42.
- Jones, Sergeant, recruiting assistant to G. Farquhar, 234, 242, 243.
- Joulet, Pierre, Chevalier de Chastillon, author of *Les Amours d'Armide*, 177-78.
- 'Jubilee Dicky' (Henry Norris), 104.
- Keen, Theophilus, member of Smock Alley Theatre, 45, 46, 249, 295.
- Kendrick, Daniel, author of *A New Session of Poets, Occasion'd by the Death of Dryden*, 126.
- Kent, Mr., actor, 249.
- Kilbarron, County Donegal, living of the Rev. G. Farquhar, 13.
- Kildoney Glebe, home of the Rev. G. Farquhar, 14.
- Killymard, Ireland, living of John Farquhar, 14.
- King, William, Bishop of Derry in 1691, 20.
- Knight, Eloas, illustrator of *The Works of the late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar*, 308-09, 314.
- Knight, Mrs., actress, 306.
- Lee, Nat, actor and dramatist, 262.
- Les Carosses d'Orléans*, by Jean de la Chapelle, 211.
- Letters of Wit, Politicks, and Morality*, by Cardinal Bentivoglio, edited by Abel Boyer, 170.
- 'Life and Character of Mr. George Farquhar, The', published by Edmund Curll, 313.
- Linsey, Mrs., opera singer, 268.
- Lintot, Bernard, publisher, 170, 171, 173, 197, 248, 259, 295, 309.
- Lloyd, Owen, Junior Dean of Trinity College and tutor of George Farquhar, 28, 42.
- Locket's, tavern in Charing Cross, 53.
- London under King William III, 50-55.
- Long, Widow, proprietress of the Rose Tavern, 54.
- Longueville, William, barrister, 189-90, 202.
- Love's Contrivance*, by Susannah Carroll, 208.
- Lovewell, Ned, character in *Love and a Bottle*, 73.
- Lurewell, Lady, character in *A Trip to the Jubilee*, 93.
- Macclesfield, Countess of, married to Henry Bret, M.P., 198.
- Madame Fickle* written by Tom Durfey, 93.
- Mandrake, Mrs., character in *The Twin Rivals*, by G. Farquhar, 191, 193-95.
- Manley, Mary de la Rivière, 220.
- Manley, Peter, Dean of Derry, 18, 20.
- Manning, Francis, author of *All for the Better; or, The Infallible Cure*, 203-04.
- Man of Mode, The*, by Etherege, 127.
- Maynwaring, Arthur, M.P., Auditor of Imprests, 248.
- 'Memoirs of the Author Never Before Published', biography included in Farquhar's *Works*, by W. R. Chetwood, 314.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

- Memoirs Relating to the Late Famous Mr. Thomas Brown, with a Catalogue of his Library*, 1704, by Tom Brown, 225.
- Michelburne, Major John, 19.
- Miller, Jacob, printer and employer of Peyton Farquhar, 42, 226.
- Mills, John, actor, 75, 94, 153, 166, 191, 215, 295, 298, 300, 315.
- Mills, Mrs., actress, 296.
- Milton, John, influence upon Farquhar, 272, 274-5, 283-5, 287-8, 292.
- Minns, Mr., actor, 191.
- Mistake, The*, adapted by John Vanbrugh from *Depit amoureux*, by Molière, 240.
- Mitre Tavern, The, in St. James's Market, 54, 86.
- Moor, Mrs., actress, 94, 190, 191, 306.
- Morrice, John, master of Drogheda Grammar School, 25.
- Mostyn, Sir Roger, to whom *A Trip to the Jubilee* was dedicated, 103, 183.
- Motteux, Peter, dramatist, 171, 181, 192, 210, 214, 226.
- Mountfort, Mrs., actress, 249.
- Mourning Bride, The*, by Congreve, 52, 84, 214.
- Moyle, Walter, 57.
- Muse's Mercury, The*, appraisal of G. Farquhar, 304, 305.
- Mutiny and Impressment Acts of 1703-05, 234-35.
- Norris, Henry (Dicky), actor, 42, 45, 46, 93, 103-04, 153, 166, 181, 215, 248, 267, 268, 296, 298, 300.
- North, Roger, barrister, 189.
- Oldfield, Anne, actress, 86-88, 89, 105, 113, 119, 131, 148, 174, 208-09, 210, 230-31, 267, 269, 296, 298, 305.
- parts played by:
- Candiope in *Secret Love*, by Dryden, 87.
- Lady Lurewell in *A Trip to the Jubilee*, 209, 230-31, 300.
- Mrs. Sullen in *The Beaux Stratagem*, 296, 298, 300.
- Silvia in *The Recruiting Officer*, 248, 251, 261-62, 268, 276.
- Oldfield, Captain, 86.
- Oldmixon, John, 58, 104, 127-28, 209, 304.
- Oriana, character from *The Inconstant*, by G. Farquhar, 178-79.
- Ormonde, Duke of, 222, 235, 241, 247, 259, 260, 265, 295, 305.
- Owens, Athelstane, 238, 242.
- Pack, George, actor, 215.
- Patriot, The; or, The Italian Conspiracy*, by Charles Gildon, 203.
- Pawlet's, Old Broad Street, 54.
- Peace of Ryswick, 59.
- Pemell, Benjamin, 205-06, 305.
- Pemell, Mrs. Margaret, 204-07, 272-73, 314.
- Penelope, mistress of George Farquhar, 113-17, 119, 174.
- Perjured Husband, The*, by Mrs. Susannah Carroll, 109, 140, 147.
- Philips, Mr., actor, 249.
- Phipps, Mrs., 200.
- Physic Lies A-bleeding; or, The Apothecary Turned Doctor*, by Tom Brown, 59.
- Pilgrim, The*, by John Fletcher, adapted by Captain Vanbrugh, 104, 105, 177.

INDEX

- Pilott, Joshua, usher at Derry Free School, 18-19, 20.
- Pinkethman, William, actor, 75, 94, 153, 166, 181, 190, 191, 215, 267, 268, 269, 276.
- Pix, Mary, author of *The Different Widows; or, Intrigue All-à-Mode*, 220.
- Plain Dealer, The*, by Will Wycherley, 56, 192.
- Plot and No Plot, A*, by John Dennis, 56, 73.
- Poems on Affairs of State*, 171.
- Pontack's, Abchurch Lane, 54.
- Pope, Alexander, 303.
- Powell, George, actor, 75, 89, 94, 103, 153.
- Powell, Mrs., 296, 298, 300.
- Practice of Piety, or How a Christian Should Live*, by Bishop Bailey, 52.
- Price, Mrs., actress, 215.
- Princess's Chocolate House, near the New Exchange, 54.
- Prior, Sam, owner of the Rummer Tavern, 53.
- Provoked Wife, The*, by Captain John Vanbrugh, 52, 55, 56, 63, 214, 240, 275, 278.
- Quin, James, actor, 314.
- Ramble, speaker in 'A Comparison Between the Two Stages', 185-88.
- Raphoe, Ireland, 14.
- Raven, The, inn at Shrewsbury, 236.
- Relapse, The*, by Captain John Vanbrugh, 52, 55, 60, 62, 73, 240, 275, 288, 291.
- Religio Poetae, or a Satire on the Poets*, 202.
- Rich, Christopher, manager of Drury Lane Theatre, 40, 88, 93, 128, 181, 190, 197, 203, 214, 248, 259, 267, 268, 269.
- Richards, John, comedian, 39, 40.
- Richmore, character in *The Twin Rivals*, by G. Farquhar, 190, 193-95.
- Roebuck, George, character in *Love and a Bottle*, 73.
- Rogers, Jane, actress, 76, 94, 153, 166, 181, 191, 215, 248, 300, 315.
- Roman Bourgeoise*, by Anton Furetière, 65.
- Romney, Earl of, 206.
- Rose, The, Russell Street, 54.
- Rowe, Nicholas, 240.
- Rummer Tavern, The, Whitehall, 53.
- Sapsford, Mrs., actress, 249.
- Scarron, Paul, alleged author of *Roman Bourgeoise*, 65.
- Schomberg, General Frederick, 19-20.
- Settle, Elkanah, 63, 209.
- Servant, Thomas, Dublin, bookseller, 227.
- Shadwell, John, M.D., F.R.S., doctor to George Farquhar, 268, 306.
- She stoops to Conquer*, by Oliver Goldsmith, 316.
- She Would and She Would Not*, adapted by Colley Cibber, 190, 192, 197, 258.
- Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, 38, 39.
- Smock Alley Theatre, re-opened by Joseph Ashbury in 1692, 40.
- Smyrna Coffee-house in Pall Mall, 53.

YOUNG GEORGE FARQUHAR

- Smyth, Edward, companion to G. Farquhar at Donnybrook Fair, 33-35, 47.
- Soubigny, Mlle., opera-singer, 182-83.
- Springham, Matthias, founder of Derry School, 16.
- Stampiglio, librettist of *Camilla*, 249.
- Standard, Colonel Frank, character in *A Trip to the Jubilee*, 93.
- Stanhope, Lord, 233.
- St. Columba, cathedral of, Derry, 237.
- Steele, Captain Richard, 154, 155, 200, 209, 223, 260-61, 264, 298-99.
- St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, 237.
- Strong, John, fellow-pupil of G. Farquhar, 22, 36.
- Sullen, speaker in 'A Comparison Between the Two Stages', 185-88.
- Sun Tavern, The, 54.
- Swiney, Owen, 249, 267, 269, 275, 295.
- Taylor, Jeremy, Bishop of Dromore, 14.
- Taylor, J., London publisher, 52.
- Tender Husband, The*, by Captain R. Steele, 298.
- Thatched House, The, in St. James's Street, 53.
- Thimble, Tom, friend of Thomas Goffe, 218.
- Thyrsis, a Pastoral*, by the Hon. Charles Boyle, 58.
- Tighe, Richard, friend of G. Farquhar at Trinity College, 30-31, 36, 42, 183-84.
- Tofts, Katherine, opera-singer, 249, 268.
- Tonson, Elizabeth, 154, 155.
- Tonson, Jacob, publisher, 52, 110.
- Tooke, B., London publisher, 52.
- Trial of Skill, The; or, A New Session of the Poets*, 224.
- Trinity College, Dublin, 27-28.
- Religion at, 29.
- Routine of undergraduates at, 28-29.
- Trotter, Catherine, author of *The Fatal Friendship*, 83-85, 105-106, 119, 209, 220.
- Trout, Mr., actor, 215.
- Trueman, character in *The Twin Rivals*, by G. Farquhar, 190, 193-95.
- Union of England and Scotland by the consent of Queen Anne, 297.
- Urwin, Will, proprietor of Will's Coffee-house, 55, 58.
- Ustick, Charles, 134, 140-42.
- Vanbrugh, Captain John, 56, 90, 92, 104, 223, 236, 240, 267, 274, 303.
- Meets Anne Oldfield, 87.
- Verbruggen, John, actor, 296.
- Verbruggen, Susannah, actress, 87, 93-94, 112-13, 153, 166, 181, 190, 205, 208, 215.
- Death of, 209-10.
- Vernon, Henry, 237.
- Vindication*, by Captain Vanbrugh, 62, 63.
- Virgil*, translated by Dryden, 52.
- Voss, Mrs., owner of the Mitre Tavern, 54, 86.
- Walker, Dr. Samuel, uncle of Ellis Walker, 21.

INDEX

- Walker, Ellis, Headmaster of the Free Grammar School of Londonderry and teacher of George Farquhar, 16, 17, 20, 24. Becomes master at Drogheda Grammar School, 25. Departure to Yorkshire of, 18. Resumes headmastership of Derry Free School, 21.
- Walker, George, rector of Desertlyn, 18, 20, 24.
- Wallis, Gilbert, son of Dean Thomas, 20, 23, 36.
- Wallis, Thomas, Dean of Derry in 1691, 20.
- Ward, Ned, 61.
- Way of the World, The*, by William Congreve, 104, 105, 214.
- Westmorland, the Earl of, 146.
- Wild Goose Chase*, by John Fletcher, adapted by G. Farquhar, 177-78.
- Wilks, Robert, actor, 38-39, 45, 46, 48, 58, 88, 90, 94, 99, 105, 127, 147, 153, 166, 178, 181, 190, 210, 215, 219, 267, 268, 269-70, 271, 275, 293, 295, 296-97, 298, 303, 306, 310, 311-12, 313. Married to Elizabeth Knapton, 41. parts played by:
Archer in *The Beaux Stratagem*, 293, 295, 298.
Belvil in *The Platonic Lady*, 269.
Captain Plume in *The Recruiting Officer*, 248, 261, 276.
Hermes Wou'dbee in *The Twin Rivals*, 191, 193-95.
Lysippus in the *Maid's Tragedy*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, 41.
Othello, 40.
Palamede in *Marriage à la Mode*, by Dryden, 88-89.
- Wilks, Robert, actor—*continued*.
Sir Harry Wildair in *A Trip to the Jubilee*, 93, 261, 298, 300.
Young Mirabel in *The Inconstant*, by G. Farquhar, 178, 181, 182. Re-married to a needlewoman of Westminster, 312.
Returns to Ireland, 41.
Secretary to Sir Robert Southwell, 39.
Death of, 314.
- William III, death of, 183.
- Williams, Joseph, actor, 75, 88, 248.
- Will's Coffee-house, Russell Street, 55.
- Wiseman, Capel, Dean of Raphoe, 15, 21, 25.
Becomes Bishop of Dromore, 16.
Death of, 30.
- Wiseman, Mrs. Jane, 130.
Verses written by, 130.
- Wonders in the Sun, or the Kingdom of the Birds*, by Tom Durfey, 249, 267.
- Works of the late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar, The*, dedicated to John Eyre, 308.
- Works of the late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar, The*, illustrated by Eloas Knight, 308-09.
- Works of the late Ingenious Mr. George Farquhar, The*, published by Bernard Lintot, 308.
- Wotton, Mrs., sempstress, 86.
- Wycherley, Will, dramatist, 56, 62, 73, 90, 92, 136, 274, 303.
- York Buildings, London, home of G. Farquhar, 263.
- Young Mirabel, character from *The Inconstant*, by G. Farquhar, 178-79.

